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*Drake, an English Epic, Books I-XII*

Alfred Noyes

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June 6, 1930





**DRAKE**  
*AN ENGLISH EPIC*  
**BOOKS I-XII**







SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

*From an Original Painting*

# DRAKE

*AN ENGLISH*

Books

ALFRED



NEW YORK  
FREDERICK A. STOUGHTON,  
PUBLISHER



# DRAKE

*AN ENGLISH EPIC*

Books I-XII

BY  
ALFRED NOYES



NEW YORK  
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

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*September, 1909*

*To*

**RUDOLPH CHAMBERS LEHMANN**



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# DRAKE

## PROLOGUE TO AMERICAN EDITION

### I

*E*NGLAND, my mother,  
Lift to my western sweetheart  
One full cup of English mead,  
breathing of the may!  
Pledge the may-flower in her face that you  
and ah, none other,  
Sent her from the mother-land  
Across the dashing spray.

### II

Hers and yours the story:  
Think of it, oh, think of it—  
That immortal dream when El Dorado flushed  
the skies!  
Fill the beaker full and drink to Drake's  
undying glory,  
Yours and hers (Oh, drink of it!).  
The dream that never dies.

### I

## DRAKE

---

### III

*Yours and hers the free-men  
Who scanned the stars and westward sung  
When a king commanded and the Atlantic  
thundered "Nay!"  
Hers as yours the pride is, for Drake our first  
of seamen  
First upon his bow-sprit hung  
That bunch of English may.*

### IV.

*Pledge her deep, my mother;  
Through her veins thy life-stream runs!  
Spare a thought, too, sweetheart, for my mother  
o'er the sea!  
Younger eyes are yours; but ah, those old eyes  
and none other  
Once bedewed the may-flower; once,  
As yours, were clear, and free.*

### V

*Once! Nay, now as ever,  
Beats within her ancient heart*

## PROLOGUE

---

*All the faith that took you forth to seek your  
heaven alone:  
Shadows come and go; but let no shade of doubt  
dissever,  
'Cloak, or cloud, or keep apart  
Two souls whose prayer is one.*

### VII

*Sweetheart, ah, be tender—  
Tender with her prayer to-night!  
Such a goal might yet be ours!—the battle-flags  
be furled,  
All the wars of earth be crushed, if only now  
your slender  
Hand should grasp her gnarled old hand  
And federate the world.*

### VIII

*Foolish it may seem, sweet!  
Still the battle thunder lours:  
Darker loom the Dreadnoughts as old Europe goes  
her way!  
Yet your hand, your hand, has power to crush  
that evil dream, sweet;*

## DRAKE

---

*You, with younger eyes than ours  
And brows of English may.*

### VIII

*If a singer cherishes  
Idle dreams or idle words,  
You shall judge—and you'll forgive: for, far  
away or nigh,  
Still abides that Vision without which a people  
perishes:  
Love will strike the atoning chords!  
Hark—there comes a cry!*

### IX

*Over all this earth, sweet,  
The poor and weak look up to you—  
Lift their burdened shoulders, stretch their fettered  
hands in prayer:  
You, with gentle hands, can bring the  
world-wide dream to birth, sweet,  
While I lift this cup to you  
And wonder—will she care?*

## PROLOGUE

---

### X

*Kindle, eyes, and beat, heart!  
Hold the brimming beaker up!  
All the may is burgeoning from East to golden  
West!  
England, my mother, greet America, my  
sweetheart:  
—Ah, but ere I drained the cup,  
I found her on your breast.*

## EXORDIUM

**W**HEN on the highest ridge of that  
strange land,  
Under the cloudless, blinding tropic  
blue,  
Drake and his band of swarthy seamen stood  
With dazed eyes gazing round them, emerald fans  
Of palm that fell like fountains over cliffs  
Of gorgeous red anana bloom obscured  
Their sight on every side. Illustrious gleams  
Of rose and green and gold streamed from the  
plumes  
That flashed like living rainbows through the  
glades.  
Piratic glints of musketoon and sword,  
The scarlet scarves around the tawny throats,  
The bright brass ear-rings in the sun-black ears,  
And the calm faces of the negro guides  
Opposed their barbarous bravery to the noon:  
Yet a deep silence dreadfully besieged

## EXORDIUM

---

Even those mighty hearts upon the verge  
Of the undiscovered world. Behind them lay  
The old earth they knew. In front they could  
not see

What lay beyond the ridge. Only they heard  
Cries of the painted birds troubling the heat  
And shivering through the woods; till Francis  
Drake

Plunged through the hush, took hold upon a tree,  
The tallest near them, and clomb upward, branch  
By branch.

And, lo! as he swung clear above  
The steep-down forest, on his wondering eyes  
Mile upon mile of rugged shimmering gold  
Burst the unknown immeasurable sea.  
Then he descended; and with a new voice  
Vowed that, God helping, he would one day plough  
Those virgin waters with an English keel.

So here before the unattempted task,  
Above the Golden Ocean of my dream  
I clomb and saw in splendid pageant pass  
The wild adventures and heroic deeds

## D R A K E

---

Of England's epic age—a vision lit  
With mighty prophecies, fraught with a doom  
Worthy the great Homeric roll of song,  
Yet all unsung and unrecorded quite  
By those who might have touched with Raphael's  
hand  
The large imperial legend of our race,  
Ere it brought forth the braggarts of an hour,  
Self-worshippers who love their imaged strength,  
And as a symbol for their own proud selves  
Misuse the sacred name of this dear land,  
While England to the Empire of her soul,  
Like some great Prophet passes through the crowd  
That cannot understand; for he must climb  
Up to that sovran thunder-smitten peak  
Where he shall grave and trench on adamant  
The Law that God shall utter by the still  
Small voice, not by the whirlwind or the fire.  
There, labouring for the Highest in himself,  
He shall achieve the good of all mankind;  
'And from that lonely Sinai shall return  
Triumphant o'er the little gods of gold  
That rule their little hour upon the plain.

## EXORDIUM

---

Oh, thou blind master of these opened eyes,  
Be near me, therefore, now; for not in pride  
I lift lame hands to this imperious theme;  
But yearning to a power above mine own  
Even as a man might lift his hands in prayer.  
Or as a child, perchance, in those dark days  
When London lay beleaguered and the ax  
Flashed out for Rome in England; and the blood  
Of martyrs made a purple path for Spain  
Up to the throne of Mary; as a child  
Gathering with friends upon a winter's morn  
For some mock fight between the hateful prince  
Philip and Thomas Wyatt, all at once  
Might see in gorgeous ruffs embastioned  
Popinjay plumes and slouching hats of Spain,  
Gay shimmering silks and rich encrusted gems,  
Gold collars, rare brocades, and sleek trunk-hose  
The Ambassador and peacock courtiers come  
Strutting along the white snow-strangled street,  
A walking plot of scarlet Spanish flowers,  
And with one cry a hundred boyish hands  
Put them to flight with snowballs, while the wind  
All round their Spanish ears hissed like a flight

## DRAKE

---

Of white-winged geese: so may I wage perchance  
A mimic war with all my heart in it,  
Munitioned with mere perishable snow,  
Which mightier hands one day will urge with steel.  
Yet may they still remember me as I  
Remember, with one little laugh of love,  
That child's game, this were wealth enough for me.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my prayer;  
Help me that I may tell the enduring tale  
Of that great seaman, good at need, who first  
Sailed round this globe and made one little isle,  
One little isle against that huge Empire  
Of Spain, whose might was paramount on earth,  
O'ertopping Babylon, Nineveh, Greece and Rome,  
Carthage and all huge Empires of the past,  
He made this little isle, against the world,  
Queen of the earth and sea. Nor this alone  
The theme; for, in a mightier strife engaged  
Even than he knew, he fought for the new faiths,  
Championing our manhood as it rose  
And cast its feudal chains before the seat  
Of kings;—nay, in a mightier battle yet

## EXORDIUM

---

He fought for the soul's freedom, fought the fight  
Which, though it still rings in our wondering ears,  
Was won then and for ever—that great war,  
That last Crusade of Christ against His priests,  
Wherein Rome fell behind a thunderous roar  
Of ocean triumph over burning ships  
And shattered fleets, while England, England rose,  
Her white cliffs laughing out across the waves,  
Victorious over all her enemies.  
And while he won the world for her domain,  
Her loins brought forth, her fostering bosom fed  
Souls that have swept the spiritual seas  
From heaven to hell, and justified her crown.  
For round the throne of great Elizabeth  
Verulam, Burleigh, Sidney, Spenser, More,  
Clustered like stars, rare Jonson like the crown  
Of Cassiopeia, Marlowe ruddy as Mars,  
And over all those mighty hearts arose  
The soul of Shakespeare brooding far and wide  
Beyond our small horizons, like a light  
Thrown from a vaster sun that still illumes  
Tracts which the arc of our increasing day  
Must still leave undiscovered, unexplored.

## DRAKE

---

Mother and love, fair England, hear my prayer,  
As thou didst touch the heart and light the flame  
Of wonder in those eyes which first awoke  
To beauty and the sea's adventurous dream  
Three hundred years ago, three hundred years,  
And five long decades, in the leafy lanes  
Of Devon, where the tallest trees that bore  
The raven's matted nest had yielded up  
Their booty, while the perilous branches swayed  
Beneath the boyish privateer, the king  
Of many young companions—Francis Drake;  
So hear me and so help, for more than his  
My need is, even than when he first set sail  
Upon that wild adventure with three ships  
And three-score men from grey old Plymouth  
Sound,  
Not knowing if he went to life or death,  
Nor caring greatly, so that he were true  
To his own sleepless and unfaltering soul,  
Which could not choose but hear the ringing call  
Across the splendours of the Spanish Main  
From ever fading, ever new horizons,  
And shores beyond the sunset and the sea.

## EXORDIUM

---

Mother and sweetheart, England; from whose  
breast,  
With all the world before them, they went forth,  
Thy seamen, o'er the wide uncharted waste,  
Wider than that Ulysses roamed of old,  
Even as the wine-dark Mediterranean  
Is wider than some tide-relinquished pool  
'Among its rocks, yet none the less explored  
To greater ends than all the pride of Greece  
And pomp of Rome achieved; if my poor song  
Now spread too wide a sail, forgive thy son  
And lover, for thy love was ever wont  
To lift men up in pride above themselves  
To do great deeds which of themselves alone  
They could not; thou hast led the unfaltering feet  
Of even thy meanest heroes down to death,  
Lifted poor knights to many a great emprise,  
Taught them high thoughts, and though they kept  
their souls  
Lowly as little children, bidden them lift  
Eyes unappalled by all the myriad stars  
That wheel around the great white throne of God.

## BOOK I

**N**OW through the great doors of the  
Council-room  
Magnificently streamed in rich array  
The peers of England, regal of aspect  
And grave. Their silence waited for the Queen:  
And even now she came; and through their midst,  
Low as they bowed, she passed without a smile  
And took her royal seat. A bodeful hush  
Of huge anticipation gripped all hearts,  
Compressed all brows, and loaded the broad noon  
With gathering thunder: none knew what the hour  
Might yet bring forth; but the dark fire of war  
Smouldered in every eye; for every day  
The Council met debating how to join  
Honour with peace, and every day new tales  
Of English wrongs received from the red hands  
Of that gigantic Empire, insolent  
Spain, spurred fiercer resentments up like steeds  
Revolting, on the curb, foaming for battle,

## BOOK I

---

In all men's minds, against whatever odds.  
On one side of the throne great Walsingham,  
A lion of England, couchant, watchful, calm,  
Was now the master of opinion : all  
Drew to him. Even the hunchback Burleigh  
smiled  
With half-ironic admiration now,  
As in the presence of the Queen they met  
Amid the sweeping splendours of her court,  
A cynic smile that seemed to say, "I, too,  
Would fain regain that forthright heart of fire;  
Yet statesmanship is but a smoother name  
For the superior cunning which ensures  
Victory." And the Queen, too, knowing her  
strength  
And weakness, though her woman's heart leaped  
out  
To courage, yet with woman's craft preferred  
The subtler strength of Burleigh; for she knew  
Mary of Scotland waited for that war  
To strike her in the side for Rome; she knew  
How many thousands lurked in England still  
Remembering Rome and bloody Mary's reign.

## D R A K E

---

France o'er a wall of bleeding Huguenots  
Watched for an hour to strike. Against all these  
What shield could England raise—this little isle,  
Outmatched, outnumbered, perilously near  
Utter destruction?

So the long debate  
Proceeded.

All at once there came a cry  
Along the streets and at the palace gates  
And at the great doors of the Council-room!  
Then through the pikes and halberds a voice rose  
Imperative for entrance, and the guards  
Made way, and a strange whisper surged around,  
And through the peers of England thrilled the  
blood

Of Agincourt as to the foot of the throne  
Came Leicester, for behind him as he came  
A seaman stumbled, travel-stained and torn,  
Crying for justice, and gasped out his tale.  
“The Spaniards,” he moaned, “the Inquisition!  
They have taken all my comrades, all our crew,  
And flung them into dungeons: there they lie  
Waiting for England, waiting for their Queen!



QUEEN ELIZABETH, 1585

*From a Painting by Nicholas Hilliard*



## BOOK I

---

Will you not free them? I alone am left!  
All London is afire with it, for this  
Was one of your chief city merchant's ships—  
The *Pride of London*, one of Osborne's ships!  
But there is none to help them! I escaped  
With shrieks of torment ringing in these ears,  
The glare of torture-chambers in these eyes  
That see no faces anywhere but blind,  
Blind faces, each a bruise of white that smiles  
In idiot agony, washed with sweat and blood,  
The face of some strange thing that once was man,  
And now can only turn from side to side  
Babbling like a child, with mouth agape,  
And crying for help where there is none to hear  
Save those black vizards in the furnace-glow,  
Moving like devils at their hellish trade. . . .”  
He paused; his memory sickened, his brain  
swooned  
Back into that wild glare of obscene pain!  
Once more to his ears and nostrils horribly crept  
The hiss and smell of shrivelling human flesh!  
His dumb stare told the rest: his head sank down;  
He bowed; he fell; he strove in agony

## D R A K E

---

With what all hideous words must leave untold;  
While Leicester vouched him, “ This man’s tale  
is true ! ”

But like a gathering storm a windy moan  
Of passion, like a tiger’s, slowly crept  
From the grey lips of Walsingham. “ My Queen,  
Will you not free them ? ”

Then Elizabeth,  
Whose name is one for ever with the name  
Of England, rose; and in her face the gleam  
Of justice that makes anger terrible  
Shone, and she stretched her glittering sceptre  
forth  
And spoke, with distant empires in her eyes :

“ My lords, this is the last cry they shall wring  
From English lips unheeded: we will have  
Such remedies for this as all the world  
Shall tremble at ! ”

And, on that night, while Drake  
Close in his London lodging lay concealed  
Until he knew if it were peace or war  
With Spain (for he had struck on the high seas

## BOOK I

---

At Spain; and well he knew if it were peace  
His blood would be made witness to that bond,  
And he must die a pirate's death or fly  
Westward once more), there all alone, he pored  
By a struggling rushlight o'er a well-thumbed chart  
Of magic islands in the enchanted seas,  
Dreaming, as boys and poets only dream  
With those that see God's wonders in the deep,  
Perilous visions of those palmy keys,  
Cocoa-nut islands, parrot-haunted woods,  
Crisp coral reefs and blue shark-finned lagoons  
Fringed with the creaming foam, mile upon mile  
Of mystery. Dream after dream went by,  
Colouring the brown air of that London night  
With many a mad miraculous romance.  
There, suddenly, some augury, some flash  
Showed him a coming promise, a strange hint,  
.Which, though he played with it, he scarce  
believed;  
Strange as in some dark cave the first fierce gleam  
Of pirate gold to some forlorn maroon  
Who tiptoes to the heap and glances round  
Askance, and dreads to hear what erst he longed

## DRAKE

---

To hear—some voice to break the hush; but bathes  
Both hands with childish laughter in the gold,  
And lets it trickle through his fevered palms,  
And begins counting half a hundred times  
And loses count each time for sheer delight  
And wonder in it: meantime, if he knew,  
Passing the cave-mouth, far away, beyond  
The still lagoon, the coral reef, the foam  
And the white fluttering chatter of the birds,  
A sail that might have saved him comes and goes  
Unseen across the blue Pacific sea.

So Drake, too, played with fancies; but that sail  
Passed not unseen, for suddenly there came  
A firm and heavy footstep to the door,  
Then a loud knocking; and, at first, he thought  
“I am a dead man: there is peace with Spain,  
And they are come to lead me to my doom.”  
But, as he looked across one shoulder, pride  
Checking the fuller watch for what he feared,  
The door opened; and cold as from the sea  
The night rushed in, and there against the gloom,  
Clad, as it seemed, with wind and cloud and rain,  
There loomed a stately form and high grim face

## BOOK I

---

Loaded with deadly thoughts of iron war—  
Walsingham. In one hand he held a map  
Marked with red lines; the other hand held down  
The rich encrusted hilt of his great sword.  
Then Drake rose, and the other cautiously  
Closing the door drew near the flickering light  
And spread his map out on the table, saying—  
“ Mark for me here the points whereat the King  
Philip of Spain may best be wounded, mark  
The joints of his harness;” and Drake looked at  
him

Thinking, “ If he betray me, I am dead.” —  
But the soldier met his eyes and, with a laugh,  
Drake, quivering like a bloodhound in the leash,  
Stooped, with his finger pointing thus and thus—  
“ Here would I guard, here would I lie in wait,  
Here would I strike him through the breast and  
throat.”

And as he spoke he kindled, and began  
To set forth his great dreams, and high romance  
Rose like a moon reflecting the true sun  
Unseen; and as the full round moon indeed  
Rising behind a mighty mountain-chain

## DRAKE

---

Will shadow forth in outline grim and black  
Its vast and ragged edges, so that moon  
Of high romance rose greatly shadowing forth  
The grandeur of his dreams, until their might  
Dawned upon Walsingham, and he, too, saw  
For a moment of muffled moonlight and wild cloud  
The vision of the imperious years to be!  
But suddenly Drake paused as one who strays  
Beyond the bounds of caution, paused and cursed  
His tongue for prating like a moon-struck boy's.  
"I am mad," he cried, "I am mad to babble so!"  
Then Walsingham drew near him with strange  
eyes,  
And muttered slowly, "Write that madness down;  
Ay, write it down, that madman's plan of thine;  
Sign it, and let me take it to the Queen."  
But the weather-wiser seaman warily  
Answered him, "If it please Almighty God  
To take away our Queen Elizabeth,  
Seeing that she is mortal as ourselves,  
England might then be leagued with Spain, and I  
Should here have sealed my doom. I will not put  
My pen to paper."



SIR FRANCIS WALSHAM

*From an Original Painting*



## BOOK I

---

So, across the charts,  
With that dim light on each grim countenance  
The seaman and the courtier subtly fenced  
With words and thoughts, but neither would betray  
His whole heart to the other. At the last  
Walsingham gripped the hand of Francis Drake  
And left him wondering.

On the third night came  
A messenger from Walsingham, who bade  
Drake to the Palace, where, without one word,  
The statesman met him in an anteroom  
And led him, with flushed cheek and beating heart,  
Along a mighty gold-gloomed corridor  
Into a high-arched chamber, hung with tall  
Curtains of gold-fringed silk and tapestries  
From Flanders looms, whereon were flowers and  
beasts  
And forest-work, great knights, with hawk on  
hand,  
Riding for ever on their glimmering steeds  
Through bowery glades to some immortal face  
Beyond the fairy fringes of the world.  
A silver lamp swung softly overhead,

## D R A K E

---

Fed with some perfumed oil that shed abroad  
Delicious light and fragrances as rare  
As those that stirred faint wings at eventide  
Through the King's House in Lebanon of old.  
Into a quietness as of fallen bloom  
Their feet sank in that chamber; and, all round,  
Soft hills of Moorish cushions dimly drowsed  
On glimmering crimson couches. Near the lamp  
An ebony chess-board stood inlaid with squares  
Of ruby and emerald, garnished with cinque-foils  
Of silver, bears and ragged staves: the men,  
Likewise of precious stones, were all arrayed—  
Bishops and knights and elephants and pawns—  
As for a game. Sixteen of them were set  
In silver white, the other sixteen gilt.  
Now, as Drake gazed upon an arras, nigh  
The farther doors, whereon was richly wrought  
The picture of that grave and lovely queen  
Penelope, with cold hands weaving still  
The unending web, while in an outer court  
The broad-limbed wooers basking in the sun  
On purple fleeces took from white-armed girls,  
Up-kirtled to the knee, the crimson wine;

## BOOK I

---

There, as he gazed and thought, " Is this not like  
Our Queen Elizabeth, who waits and weaves,  
Penelope of England, her dark web  
Unendingly till England's Empire come?"  
There, as he gazed, for a moment, he could vow  
The pictured arras moved. Well had it been  
Had he drawn sword and pierced it through and  
through;  
But he suspected nothing and said nought  
To Walsingham; for thereupon they heard  
The sound of a low lute and a sweet voice  
Carolling like a gold-caged nightingale,  
Caught by the fowlers ere he found his mate,  
And singing all his heart out evermore  
To the unknown forest-love he ne'er should see.  
And Walsingham smiled sadly to himself,  
Knowing the weary queen had bidden some maid  
Sing to her, even as David sang to Saul;  
Since all her heart was bitter with her love  
Or so it was breathed (and there the chess-board  
stood,  
Her love's device upon it), though she still,  
For England's sake, must keep great foreign kings

## D R A K E

---

Her suitors, wedding no man till she died.  
Nor did she know how, in her happiest hour  
Remembered now most sorrowfully, the moon,  
Vicegerent of the sky, through summer dews,  
As that sweet ballad tells in plaintive rhyme,  
Silvering the grey old Cumnor towers and all  
The hollow haunted oaks that grew thereby,  
Gleamed on a casement whence the pure white  
face

Of Amy Robsart, wife of Leicester, wife  
Unknown of the Queen's lover, a frail bar  
To that proud Earl's ambition, quietly gazed  
And heard the night-owl hoot a dark presage  
— Of murder through her timid, shuddering heart.  
But of that deed Elizabeth knew nought;  
Nay, white as Amy Robsart in her dream  
Of love she listened to the sobbing lute,  
Bitterly happy, proudly desolate;  
So heavy are all earth's crowns and sharp with  
thorns!  
But tenderly that high-born maiden sang:

## BOOK I

---

### SONG

*Now the purple night is past,  
Now the moon more faintly glows,  
Dawn has through thy casement cast  
Roses on thy breast, a rose;  
Now the kisses are all done,  
Now the world awakes anew,  
Now the charmèd hour is gone,  
Let not love go, too.*

*When old winter, creeping nigh,  
Sprinkles raven hair with white,  
Dims the brightly glancing eye,  
Laughs away the dancing light,  
Roses may forget their sun,  
Lilies may forget their dew,  
Beauties perish, one by one,  
Let not love go, too.*

*Palaces and towers of pride  
Crumble year by year away;  
Creeds like robes are laid aside,  
Even our very tombs decay!*

## DRAKE

---

*When the all-conquering moth and rust  
Gnaw the goodly garment through,  
When the dust returns to dust,  
Let not love go, too.*

*Kingdoms melt away like snow,  
Gods are spent like wasting flames,  
Hardly the new peoples know  
Their divine thrice-worshipped names!  
At the last great hour of all,  
When Thou makest all things new,  
Father, hear Thy children call,  
Let not love go, too.*

The song ceased: all was still; and now it seemed  
Power brooded on the silence, and Drake saw  
A woman come to meet him,—tall and pale  
And proud she seemed: behind her head two wings  
As of some mighty phantom butterfly  
Glimmered with jewel-sparks in the gold gloom.  
Her small, pure, grey-eyed face above her ruff  
Was chiselled like an agate; and he knew  
It was the Queen. Low bent he o'er her hand;  
And “Ah,” she said, “Sir Francis Walsingham

## BOOK I

---

Hath told me what an English heart beats here!  
Know you what injuries the King of Spain  
Hath done us?" Drake looked up at her: she  
smiled,

"We find you apt! Will you not be our knight?  
For we are helpless"—witchingly she smiled—  
"We are not ripe for war; our policy  
Must still be to uphold the velvet cloak  
Of peace; but I would have it mask the hand  
That holds the dagger! Will you not unfold  
Your scheme to us?" And then with a low bow  
Walsingham, at a signal from the Queen,  
Withdrew; and she looked down at Drake and  
smiled;

And in his great simplicity the man  
Spake all his heart out like some youthful knight  
Before his Gloriana: his heart burned,  
Knowing he talked with England, face to face;  
And suddenly the Queen bent down to him,  
England bent down to him, and his heart reeled  
With the beauty of her presence—for indeed  
Women alone have royal power like this  
Within their very selves enthroned and shrined

## DRAKE

---

To draw men's hearts out! Royal she bent down  
And touched his hand for a moment. "Friend,"  
she said,

Looking into his face with subtle eyes,  
"I have searched thy soul to-night and know full  
well

How I can trust thee! Canst thou think that I,  
The daughter of my royal father, lack  
The fire which every boor in England feels  
Burning within him as the bloody score  
Which Spain writes on the flesh of Englishmen  
Mounts higher day by day? Am I not Tudor?  
I am not deaf or blind; nor yet a king!  
I am a woman and a queen, and where  
Kings would have plunged into their red revenge  
Or set their throne up on this temporal shore,  
As flatterers bade that wiser king Canúte,  
Thence to command the advancing tides of battle  
Till one ensanguined sea whelm throne and king  
And kingdom; friend, I take my woman's way,  
Smile in mine enemies' faces with a heart  
All hell, and undermine them hour by hour!  
This island scarce can fend herself from France,

## BOOK I

---

And now Spain holds the keys of all the world:  
How should we fight her, save that my poor wit  
Hath won the key to Philip? Oh, I know  
His treacherous, lecherous heart, and hour by hour  
My nets are drawing round him. I, that starve ——  
My public armies, feed his private foes,  
Nourish his rebels in the Netherlands,  
Nay, sacrifice mine own poor woman's heart  
To keep him mine—there is no sacrifice  
On earth like this—and surely now stands Fate  
With hand uplifted by the doors of Spain  
Ready to knock: the time is close at hand  
When I shall strike, once, and no second stroke.  
Remember, friend, though kings have fought for  
her,  
This England, with the trident in her grasp,  
Was ever woman; and she waits her throne;  
And thou canst speed it. Furnish thee with ships,  
Gather thy gentleman adventurers,  
And be assured thy parsimonious queen—  
Oh, ay, she knows that chattering of the world—  
Will find thee wealth enough. Then put to sea,  
Fly the black flag of piracy awhile

## DRAKE

---

'Against these blackest foes of all mankind.  
Nay; what hast thou to do with piracy?  
*Hostis humani generis* indeed  
Is Spain: she dwells beyond the bounds of law;  
Thine is no piracy, whate'er men say,  
Thou art a knight on Gloriana's quest.  
Oh, lay that golden unction to thy soul,  
This is no piracy, but glorious war,  
Waged for thy country and for all mankind;  
Therefore put out to sea without one fear,  
Ransack their El Dorados of the West,  
Pillage their golden galleons, sap their strength  
Even at its utmost fountains: let them know  
That there is blood, not water, in our veins.  
Carry thy scheme out to the glorious end,  
'And, though at first thou needs must ride alone  
And unsupported, ere that end is reached,  
When I shall give the word, nay, but one word,  
All England shall be up and after thee:  
The sword of England shall shine over thee,  
And round about thee like a guardian fire;  
All the great soul of England shall be there;  
Her mighty dead shall at that cry of doom

## BOOK I

---

Rise from their graves, and in God's panoply  
Plunge with out standards through immortal  
storms

When Drake rides out across the wreck of Rome.  
As yet we must be cautious; let no breath  
Escape thee, save to thy most trusted friends; ----  
For now, if my lord Burleigh heard one word  
Of all thou hast in mind, he is so much  
The friend of caution and the beaten road  
He would not rest till he had wrecked thy hopes  
And sealed thy doom! Go now, fit out thy ships.  
Walsingham is empowered to give thee gold  
Immediately, but look to him for more

'As thou shalt need it, gold and gold to spare,  
My golden-hearted pilot to the shores  
Of Empire—so farewell;" and through the gloom  
She vanished as she came; and Drake groped,  
dazed,  
Out through the doors, and found great Walsing-  
ham  
Awaiting him with gold.

But in the room

## D R A K E

---

### Where Drake had held his converse with the Queen

The embroidered arras moved, and a lean face,  
White with its long eavesdropping upon death,  
Crept out and peered as a venomous adder peers  
From out dark ferns, then as the reptile flashes  
Along a path between two banks of flowers  
Almost too swift for sight, a stealthy form—  
One of the fifty spies whom Burleigh paid—  
Passed down the gold-gloomed corridor to seek  
His master, whom among great books he found,  
Calm, like a mountain brooding o'er the sea.  
Nor did he break that calm for all these winds  
Of rumour that now burst from out the sky.  
His brow bent like a cliff over his thoughts,  
And the spy watched him half resentfully,  
Thinking his news well worth a blacker frown.  
At last the statesman smiled and answered, “Go;  
Fetch Thomas Doughty, Leicester's secretary.”

Few suns had risen and set ere Francis Drake  
Had furnished forth his ships with guns and men,  
Tried seamen that he knew in storms of old,—

## BOOK I

---

Will Harvest, who could haul the ropes and fight  
All day, and sing a foc'sle song to cheer  
Sea-weary hearts at night; brave old Tom Moone  
The carpenter, whose faithful soul looked up  
To Drake's large mastery with a mastiff's eyes;  
And three-score trusty mariners, all scarred  
And weather-beaten. After these there came  
Some two-score gentleman adventurers,  
Gay college lads or lawyers that had grown  
Sick of the dusty Temple, and were fired  
With tales of the rich Indies and those tall  
Enchanted galleons drifting through the West,  
Laden with ingots and broad bars of gold.  
Already some had bought at a great price  
Green birds of Guatemala, which they wore  
On their slouched hats, tasting the high romance  
And new-found colours of the world like wine.  
By night they gathered in a marvellous inn  
Beside the black and secret flowing Thames;  
And joyously they tossed the magic phrase  
“Pieces of eight” from mouth to mouth, and  
laughed  
And held the red wine up, night after night,

## D R A K E

---

Around their tables, toasting Francis Drake.  
Among these came a courtier, and none knew  
Or asked by whose approval, for each thought  
Some other brought him; yet he made his way,  
Cautiously, being a man with a smooth tongue,  
The secretary of Leicester; and his name  
Was Thomas Doughty. Most of all with Drake  
He won his way to friendship, till at last  
There seemed one heart between them and one  
soul.

## BOOK II

**S**O on a misty grey December morn  
Five ships put out from calm old Plym-  
outh Sound;  
Five little ships, the largest not so large  
'As many a coasting yacht or fishing-trawl  
To-day; yet these must brave uncharted seas  
Of unimagined terrors, haunted glooms,  
And shadowy horrors of an unknown world  
Wild as primæval chaos. In the first,  
The *Golden Hynde*, a ship of eighteen guns,  
Drake sailed: John Wynter, a queen's captain, next  
Brought out the *Elizabeth*, a stout new ship  
Of sixteen guns. The pinnace *Christopher*  
Came next, in staunch command of old Tom  
Moone  
Who, five years back, with reeking powder grimed,  
Off Cartagena fought against the stars  
All night, and, as the sun arose in blood,  
Knee-deep in blood and brine, stood in the dark

## DRAKE

---

Perilous hold and scuttled his own ship  
The *Swan*, bidding her go down to God's great  
deep

Rather than yield her up a prize to Spain.

Lastly two gentleman-adventurers  
Brought out the new *Swan* and the *Marygold*.

Their crews, all told, were eight score men and  
boys.

Not only terrors of the deep they braved,  
Bodiless witchcrafts of the black abyss,  
Red gaping mouths of hell and gulfs of fire  
That yawned for all who passed the tropic line;  
But death lurked round them from their setting  
forth.

Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain,  
By spies informed, had swiftly warned his king,  
Who sent out mandates through his huge empire  
From Guadalchiber to the golden West  
For the instant sinking of all English ships  
And the instant execution of their crews  
Who durst appear in the Caribbean Sea.  
Moreover, in the pith of their emprise

## BOOK II

---

A peril lurked—Burleigh's emissaries,  
The smooth-tongued Thomas Doughty, who had  
brought  
His brother—unacquitted of that charge  
Of poisoning, raised against him by the friends  
Of Essex, but in luckless time released  
Lately for lack of proof, on no strong plea.  
These two wound through them like two snakes at  
ease  
In Eden, waiting for their venomous hour.  
Especially did Thomas Doughty toil  
With soft and flowery tongue to win his way;  
And Drake, whose rich imagination craved  
For something more than simple seaman's talk,  
Was marvellously drawn to this new friend,  
Who with the scholar's mind, the courtier's gloss,  
The lawyer's wit, the adventurer's romance,  
Gold honey from the blooms of Euphues,  
Rare flashes from the *Mermaid* and sweet smiles  
Copied from Sidney's self, even to the glance  
Of sudden, liquid sympathy, gave Drake  
That banquet of the soul he ne'er had known  
Nor needed till he knew, but needed now.

## D R A K E

---

So to the light of Doughty's answering eyes  
He poured his inmost thoughts out, hour by hour;  
And Doughty coiled up in the heart of Drake.

Against such odds the tiny fleet set sail;  
Yet gallantly and with heroic pride,  
Escutcheoned pavises, emblazoned poops,  
Banners and painted shields and close-fights hung  
With scarlet broideries. Every polished gun  
Grinned through the jaws of some heraldic beast,  
Gilded and carven and gleaming with all hues;  
While in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
Rich perfumes floated, given by the great Queen  
Herself to Drake as Captain-General;  
So that it seemed her soul was with the fleet,  
A presence to remind him, far away,  
Of how he talked with England face to face,—  
No pirate he, but Gloriana's knight.  
Silver and gold his table furniture,  
Engraved and richly chased, lavishly gleamed  
While, fanned by favouring airs, the ships ad-  
vanced  
With streaming flags and ensigns and sweet chords

## BOOK II

---

Of music struck by skilled musicians  
Whom Drake brought with him, not from vanity,  
But knowing how the pulse of men beats high  
To music; and the hearts of men like these  
Were open to the high romance of earth,  
And they that dwelt so near God's mystery  
Were proud of their own manhood. They went  
out

To danger as to a sweetheart far away,  
Who even now was drawing the western clouds  
Like a cymar of silk and snow-white furs  
Close to her, till her body's beauty seemed  
Clad in a mist of kisses. They desired  
Her glittering petulance and her sulky sweet  
Red pouts of anger. They went out to her  
With pomp and ceremony, richly attired  
And girt about with honour as befit  
Souls that might talk with angels by the way.

Light as the sea-birds dipping their white wings  
In foam before the gently heaving prows  
Each heart beat, while the low soft lapping splash  
Of water racing past them ripped and tore

## D R A K E

---

Whiter and faster, and the bellying sails  
Filled out, and the white cliffs of England sank  
Dwindling behind the broad grey plains of sea.  
Meekly content and tamely stay-at-home  
The sea-birds seemed that piped across the waves;  
And Drake, be-mused, leaned smiling to his friend  
Doughty and said, " Is it not strange to know  
When we return yon speckled herring-gulls  
Will still be wheeling, dipping, flashing there  
Just as we leave them? Ah, my heart cries out  
We shall not find a sweeter land afar  
Than those thyme-scented hills we leave behind!  
Soon the young lambs will bleat across the combes,  
And breezes will bring puffs of hawthorn scent  
Down Devon lanes; over the purple moors  
Lavrocks will carol and the plover cry,  
The nesting peewit cry; on village greens  
Around the May-pole, while the moon hangs low,  
The boys and girls of England merrily swing  
In country footing through the flowery dance;  
Roses return: I blame them not who stay,  
I blame them not at all who cling to home.  
For many of us indeed shall not return,

## BOOK II

---

Nor ever know that sweetness any more.  
But when our English clover once again  
Reddens round valleys thick with waving gold,  
Many beyond the faintest flush of dawn  
Shall sleep for ever in the cold green sea:  
'Tis only we poor wandering prodigals  
That know the worth and wealth of heaven and  
home.

Bear with my weakness, for my heart is full  
Of yonder England, our sweet Ida mount,  
Mother of all our hopes and dreams and prayers,  
Nor do I think a man needs be ashamed  
Whose eyes grow wet to leave his native land;  
For there is nought a man should hold more dear  
Than his own country and his father's home."  
Then the other with a laugh, " Nay, like the man  
Who slept a hundred years we shall return  
And find our England strange: there are great  
storms  
Brewing; God only knows what we shall find—  
Perchance a Spanish king upon the throne!  
What then?" And Drake, " I should put down  
my helm,

## D R A K E

---

And out once more to the unknown golden West  
To die, as I have lived, an Englishman.”  
So said he, while the white cliffs dwindled down,  
Faded, and vanished; but the prosperous wind  
Carried the five ships onward over the swell  
Of swinging, sweeping seas, till the sun sank,  
And height o'er height the chaos of the skies  
Broke out into the miracle of the stars.  
Frostily glittering, all the Milky Way  
Lay bare like diamond-dust upon the robe  
Of some great king. Orion and the Plough  
Glimmered through drifting gulfs of silver fleece,  
And, far away, in Italy, that night  
Young Galileo, looking upward, heard  
The self-same whisper through that wild abyss  
Which now called Drake out to the unknown West.  
But, after supper, Drake came up on deck  
With Doughty, and on the cold poop as they  
    leaned  
And gazed across the rolling gleam and gloom  
Of mighty muffled seas, began to give  
Voice to those lovely captives of the brain  
Which, like princesses in some forest-tower,

## BOOK II

---

Still yearn for the delivering prince, the sweet  
Far bugle-note that calls from answering minds.  
He told him how, in those dark days which now  
Seemed like an evil dream, when the Princess  
Elizabeth even trembled for her life  
And read there, by the gleam of Smithfield fires,  
Those cunning lessons of diplomacy  
Which saved her then and now for England's sake,  
He passed his youth. "Twas when the power of  
Rome

Began to light the gloom with that great glare  
Of martyrdom which, while the stars endure,  
Bears witness how men overcame the world,  
Trod the red flames beneath their feet like  
flowers—

Yea, cast aside the blackening robe of flesh,  
While with a crown of joy upon their heads,  
Even as into a palace, they passed through  
The portals of the tomb to prove their love  
Stronger at least than death: and, in those days  
A Puritan, with iron in his soul,  
Having in earlier manhood occupied  
His business in great waters and beheld

## DRAKE

---

The bloody cowls of the Inquisition pass  
Before the midnight moon as he kept watch;  
And having then forsworn the steely sea  
To dwell at home in England with his love  
At Tavistock in Devon, Edmund Drake  
Began, albeit too near the Abbey walls,  
To speak too staunchly for his ancient faith;  
And with his young child Francis, had to flee  
By night at last for shelter to the coast.  
Little the boy remembered of that flight,  
Pillioned behind his father, save the clang  
And clatter of the hoofs on stony ground  
Striking a sharp blue fire, while country tales  
Of highwaymen kindled his reckless heart  
As the great steed went shouldering through the  
night.

There Francis, laying a little sunburnt hand  
On the big holstered pistol at each side,  
Dreamed with his wide grey eyes that he himself  
Was riding out on some freebooting quest,  
And felt himself heroic. League by league  
The magic world rolled past him as they rode,  
Leaving him nothing but a memory

## BOOK II

---

Of his own making. Vaguely he perceived  
A thousand meadows darkly streaming by  
With clouds of perfume from their secret flowers,  
A wayside cottage-window pointing out  
A golden finger o'er the purple road;  
A puff of garden roses or a waft  
Of honeysuckle blown along a wood,  
While overhead that silver ship, the moon,  
Sailed slowly down the gulfs of glittering stars,  
Till, at the last, a buffet of fresh wind  
Fierce with sharp savours of the stinging brine  
Against his dreaming face brought up a roar  
Of mystic welcome from the Channel seas.  
And there Drake paused for a moment, as a song  
Stole o'er the waters from the *Marygold*,  
Where some musician, striking luscious chords  
Of sweet-stringed music, freed his heart's desire  
In symbols of the moment, which the rest,  
And Doughty among them, scarce could  
understand.

## DRAKE

---

### SONG

*The moon is up: the stars are bright:  
The wind is fresh and free!  
We're out to seek for gold to-night  
Across the silver sea!  
The world was growing grey and old:  
Break out the sails again!  
We're out to seek a Realm of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*We're sick of all the cringing knees,  
The courtly smiles and lies!  
God, let Thy singing Channel breeze  
Lighten our hearts and eyes!  
Let love no more be bought and sold  
For earthly loss or gain:  
We're out to seek an Age of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*Beyond the light of far Cathay,  
Beyond all mortal dreams,  
Beyond the reach of night and day  
Our Eldorado gleams,*

## BOOK II

---

*Revealing—as the skies unfold—  
A star without a stain,  
The Glory of the Gates of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

And, as the skilled musician made the words  
Of momentary meaning still imply  
His own eternal hope and heart's desire,  
Without belief, perchance, in Drake's own quest—  
To Drake's own greater mind the eternal glory  
Seemed to transfigure his immediate hope.  
But Doughty only heard a sweet concourse  
Of sounds: they ceased, and Drake resumed his  
tale  
Of that strange flight in boyhood to the sea.  
Next, the red-curtained inn and kindly hands  
Of Protestant Plymouth held his memory long;  
Often in strange and distant dreams he saw  
That scene which now he tenderly pourtrayed  
To Doughty's half-ironic smiling lips,  
Half-sympathetic eyes; he saw again  
That small inn parlour with homely fare  
Set forth upon the table, saw the gang

## D R A K E

---

Of seamen reeking from the spray come in,  
Like great new thoughts to some adventurous  
brain.

Feeding his wide grey eyes he saw them stand  
Around the crimson fire and stamp their feet  
And scatter the salt drops from their big sea-boots;  
And all that night he lay awake and heard  
Mysterious thunderings of eternal tides  
Moaning out of a cold and houseless gloom  
Beyond the world, that made it seem most sweet  
To slumber in a little four-walled inn  
Immune from all that vastness. But at dawn  
He woke, he leapt from bed, he ran and lookt,  
There, through the tiny high bright casement,  
there,—

Oh, fairy vision of that small boy's face  
Peeping at daybreak through the diamond pane!—  
There first he saw the wondrous new-born world,  
And round its princely shoulders wildly flowing,  
Gemmed with a myriad clusters of the sun,  
The magic azure mantle of the sea.  
And, afterwards, there came those marvellous days  
When, on that battleship, a disused hulk

## BOOK II

---

Rotting to death in Chatham Reach, they found  
Sanctuary and a dwelling-place at last.

For Hawkins, that great shipman, being their  
friend,

A Protestant, with power on Plymouth town,  
Nigh half whereof he owned, made Edmund  
Drake

Reader of prayer to all the ships of war  
That lay therein. So there the dreaming boy,  
Francis, grew up in that grim nursery  
Among the ropes and masts and great dumb  
mouths

Of idle ordnance. In that hulk he heard  
Many a time his father and his friends  
Over some wild-eyed troop of refugees  
Thunder against the powers of Spain and Rome,  
“Idolaters, who defiled the House of God  
In England;” and all round them, as he heard,  
The clang and clatter of shipwright hammers  
rang,

And hour by hour upon his vision rose,  
In solid oak reality, new ships,  
As Ilion rose to music, ships of war,

## D R A K E

---

The visible shapes and symbols of his dream,  
Unconscious yet, but growing as they grew,  
A wondrous incarnation, hour by hour,  
Till with their towering masts they stood complete,  
Embodyed thoughts, in God's own dockyards built,  
For Drake ere long to lead against the world.  
There, as to round the tale with ringing gold,  
Across the waters from the full-plumed *Swan*  
The music of a *Mermaid* roundelay—  
*Our Lady of the Sea*, a Dorian theme  
Tuned to the soul of England—charmed the  
moon.

### SONG

#### I

Queen Venus wandered away with a cry,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
For the purple wound in Adon's thigh;  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me;  
With a bitter farewell from sky to sky,  
And a moan—a moan from sea to sea;  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

## BOOK II

---

### II

The soft Ægean heard her sigh,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
Heard the Spartan hills reply,  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me;  
Spain was aware of her drawing nigh  
Foot-gilt from the blossoms of Italy;  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

### III

In France they heard her voice go by,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
And on the May-wind droop and die,  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me;  
Your maidens choose their loves, but I—  
White as I came from the foam-white sea,  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

### IV

The warm red-meal-winged butterfly,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—

## D R A K E

---

Beat on her breast in the golden rye,—  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me,—  
Stained her breast with a dusty dye  
Red as the print of a kiss might be!  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

### V

Is there no land, afar or nigh,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
But dreads the kiss o' the sea? Ah, why—  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me!—  
Why will ye cling to the loves that die?  
Is earth all Adon to my plea?  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

### VI

Under the warm blue summer sky,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
With outstretched arms and a low long sigh,—  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me;—  
Over the Channel they saw her fly

## BOOK II

---

To the white-cliffed island that crowns the  
sea,

*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,  
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

### VII

England laughed as her Queen drew nigh,—

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?—*

To the white-walled cottages gleaming high,  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me!

They drew her in with a joyful cry

To the hearth where she sits with a babe on  
her knee,

She has turned her moan to a lullaby,

She is nursing a son to the kings of the sea,

*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?.*

Such memories, on the plunging *Golden Hynde*,  
Under the stars, Drake drew before his friend  
Doughty; but touched most briefly on his great  
Voyage to Darien, and the famous Tree,  
And those wild exploits down to Rio Grande,

## DRAKE

---

Which even now had made his fierce renown  
Terrible to all lonely ships of Spain.  
E'en now, indeed, that poet of Portugal,  
Lope de Vega, filled with this new fear  
Began to meditate his epic muse  
Till, like a cry of panic from his lips,  
He shrilled the faint *Dragontea* forth, wherein  
Drake is that Dragon of the Apocalypse,  
The dread Antagonist of God and Man.

Well had it been for Doughty on that night  
Had he not heard what followed; for, indeed,  
When two minds clash, not often does the less  
Conquer the greater; but, without one thought  
Of evil, seeing they now were safe at sea,  
Drake told him, only somewhat, yet too much,  
Of that close conference with the Queen.

And, lo!

The face of Doughty blanched with a slow thought  
That crept like a cold worm through all his brain,  
“Thus much I knew, though secretly, before;  
But here he freely tells me as his friend;  
If I am false and he is what they say,

## BOOK II

---

His knowledge of my knowledge will mean death.”  
But Drake looked round at Doughty with a smile  
And said, “Forgive me now: thou art not used  
To these cold nights at sea! thou tremblest, friend;  
Let us go down and drink a cup of sack  
To our return!” And at that kindly smile  
Doughty shook off his nightmare mood, and  
thought,

“I am no sea-dog, but a man of birth!  
The yard-arm is for dogs, not gentlemen!  
Even Drake would not misuse a man of birth!”

And in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
Revolving subtle treacheries he sat.

There with the sugared phrases of the court  
And general sentiments which Drake believed  
Were revelations of the man’s own mind,  
Bartering beads for gold, he drew out all  
The simple Devon seaman’s inmost heart,  
And coiled up in the soul of Francis Drake.

There in the solemn night they interchanged  
Lies for sweet confidences. From one wall  
The picture of Drake’s love looked down on him;  
And, like a bashful schoolboy’s, that bronzed face

## D R A K E

---

Flushed as he blurted out with brightening eyes  
And quickening breath how he had seen her first,  
Crowned on the village green, a Queen of May.  
Her name, too, was Elizabeth, he said,  
As if it proved that she, too, was a queen,  
Though crowned with milk-white Devon may  
alone,  
'And queen but of one plot of meadow-sweet.  
As yet, he said, he had only kissed her hand,  
Smiled in her eyes and—there Drake also blanched,  
Thinking, "I ne'er may see her face again,"  
And Doughty comforted his own dark heart  
Thinking, "I need not fear so soft a soul  
As this"; and yet, he wondered how the man,  
Seeing his love so gripped him, none the less  
Could leave her, thus to follow after dreams;  
For faith to Doughty was an unknown word,  
And trustfulness the property of fools.  
At length they parted, each to his own couch,  
Doughty with half a chuckle, Francis Drake  
With one old-fashioned richly grateful prayer  
Blessing all those he loved, as he had learnt  
Beside his mother's knee in Devon days.

## BOOK II

---

So all night long they sailed; but when a rift  
Of orchard crimson broke the yellowing gloom  
And barred the closely clouded East with dawn,  
Behold, a giant galleon overhead,  
Lifting its huge black shining sides on high,  
Loomed like some misty monster of the deep:  
And, sullenly rolling out great gorgeous folds  
Over her rumbled like a thunder-cloud  
The heavy flag of Spain. The splendid poop,  
Mistily lustrous as a dragon's hoard  
Seen in some magic cave-mouth o'er the sea  
Through shimmering April sunlight after rain,  
Blazed to the morning; and her port-holes grinned  
With row on row of cannon. There at once  
One sharp shrill whistle sounded, and those five  
Small ships, mere minnows clinging to the flanks  
Of that Leviathan, unseen, unheard,  
Undreamt of, grappled her. She seemed asleep,  
Swinging at ease with great half-slackened sails,  
Majestically careless of the dawn.  
There in the very native seas of Spain,  
There with the yeast and foam of her proud cliffs,  
Her own blue coasts, in sight across the waves,

## DRAKE

---

Up her Titanic sides without a sound  
The naked-footed British seamen swarmed  
With knives between their teeth: then on her decks  
They dropped like panthers, and the softly fierce  
Black-bearded watch of Spaniards, all amazed,  
Rubbing their eyes as if at a wild dream,  
Upraised a sudden shout, *El Draque! El Draque!*  
And flashed their weapons out, but all too late;  
For, ere their sleeping comrades reached the deck,  
The little watch, outnumbered and outmatched,  
Lay bound, and o'er the hatches everywhere  
The points of naked cutlasses on guard  
Gleamed, and without a struggle those below  
Gave up their arms, their poignards jewelled thick  
With rubies, and their blades of Spanish steel.

Then onward o'er the great grey gleaming sea  
They swept with their rich booty, night and day.  
Five other prizes, one for every ship,  
Out of the seas of Spain they suddenly caught  
'And carried with them, laughing as they went—  
“Now, now indeed the Rubicon is crossed;  
Now have we singed the eyelids and the beard

## BOOK II

---

Of Spain; now have we roused the hornet's nest;  
Now shall we sail against a world in arms;  
Now we have nought between us and black death  
But our own hands, five ships, and three score  
guns."

So laughed they, plunging through the bay of  
storms,

Biscay, and past Gibraltar, not yet clothed  
With British thunder, though, as one might dream,  
Gazing in dim prophetic grandeur out  
Across the waves while that small fleet went by,  
Or watching them with love's most wistful fear  
As they plunged Southward to the lonely coasts  
Of Africa, till right in front up-soared,  
Tremendous over ocean, Teneriffe,  
Cloud-robed, but crowned with colours of the  
dawn.

Already those two traitors were at work,  
Doughty and his false brother, among the crews,  
Who knew not yet the vastness of their quest,  
Nor dreamed of aught beyond the accustomed  
world;

For Drake had kept it secret, and the thoughts

## DRAKE

---

Of some that he had shipped before the mast  
Set sail scarce farther than for Mogadore  
In West Morocco, or at the utmost mark  
For northern Egypt, by the midnight woods  
And crystal palace roofed with chrysoprase,  
Where Prester John had reigned five hundred  
years,  
And Sydon, river of jewels, through the dark  
Enchanted gorges rolled its rays along!  
Some thought of Rio Grande; but scarce to ten  
The true intent was known; while to divert  
The rest from care the skilled musicians played.  
But those two Doughtys cunningly devised  
By chance-dropt words to breathe a hint abroad;  
And through the foc'sles crept a grisly fear  
Of things that lay beyond the bourne of earth,  
Till even those hardy seamen almost quailed;  
And now, at any moment, they might turn  
With terror in their eyes. They might refuse  
To sail into that fabled burning Void  
Or brave that *primum mobile* which drew  
O'er-daring ships into the jaws of hell  
Beyond the Pole Antartice, where the sea

## BOOK II

---

Rushed down through fiery mountains, and no sail  
Could e'er return against its roaring stream.  
Now down the coast of Barbary they cruised  
Till Christmas Eve embraced them in the heart  
Of summer. In a bay of mellow calm  
They moored, and as the fragrant twilight brought  
The stars, the sound of song and dance arose;  
And down the shores in stealthy silence crept,  
Out of the massy forest's emerald gloom,  
The naked, dark-limbed children of the night,  
Unseen, to gaze upon the floating glare  
Of revelry; unheard, to hear that strange  
New music of the gods, where o'er the soft  
Ripple and wash of the lanthorn-crimsoned tide  
Will Harvest's voice above the chorus rang.

### SONG

*In Devonshire, now, the Christmas chime  
Is carolling over the lea;  
And the sexton shovels away the snow  
From the old church porch, maybe;  
And the waits with their lanthorns and noses  
a-glow*

## DRAKE

---

*Come round for their Christmas fee;  
But, as in old England it's Christmas-time,  
Why, so is it here at sea,  
My lads,  
Why, so is it here at sea!*

*When the ship comes home, from turret to poop  
Filled full with Spanish gold,  
There'll be many a country dance and joke,  
And many a tale to be told;  
Every old woman shall have a red cloak  
To fend her against the cold;  
And every old man shall have a big round stoup  
Of jolly good ale and old,  
My lads,  
Jolly good ale and old!*

But on the morrow came a prosperous wind  
Whereof they took advantage, and shook out  
The flashing sails, and held their Christmas feast  
Upon the swirling ridges of the sea :  
And, sweeping Southward with full many a rouse  
And shout of laughter, at the fall of day,

## BOOK II

---

While the black prows drove, leapt, and plunged,  
and ploughed  
Through the broad dazzle of sunset-coloured tides,  
Outside the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*,  
Where Drake and his chief captains dined in  
state,  
The skilled musicians made a great new song.

### SONG

#### I

*Happy by the hearth sit the lasses and the lads,*  
*now,*  
*Roasting of their chestnuts, toasting of their*  
*toes!*  
*When the door is opened to a blithe new-comer,*  
*Stamping like a ploughman to shuffle off the*  
*snows;*  
*Rosy flower-like faces through the soft red fire-*  
*light*  
*Float as if to greet us, far away at sea,*  
*Sigh as they remember, and turn the sigh to*  
*laughter,*

## DRAKE

---

*Kiss beneath the mistletoe and wonder at their  
glee.*

*With their "heigh ho, the holly!  
This life is most jolly!"*

*Christmas-time is kissing-time;  
Away with melancholy!*

### II

*Ah, the Yule of England, the happy Yule of  
England,*

*Yule of berried holly and the merry mistletoe;  
The boar's head, the brown ale, the blue snap-  
dragon,*

*Yule of groaning tables and the crimson log  
aglow!*

*Yule, the golden bugle to the scattered old  
companions,*

*Ringing as with laughter, shining as through  
tears!*

*Loved of little children, oh guard the holy Yule-  
tide,*

*Guard it, men of England, for the child  
beyond the years,*

## BOOK II

---

*With its "heigh ho, the holly!"  
Away with melancholy!*

*Christmas-time is kissing-time,  
"This life is most jolly!"*

Now to the Fortunate Islands of old time  
They came, and found no glory as of old  
Encircling them, no red ineffable calm  
Of sunset round crowned faces pale with bliss  
Like evening stars; but rugged, waste, and wild  
Those isles were when they neared them, though  
    afar

They beautifully smouldered in the sun  
Like dusky purple jewels fringed and frayed  
With silver foam across that ancient sea  
Of wonder. On the largest of the seven  
Drake landed Doughty with his musketeers  
To exercise their weapons and to seek  
Supplies among the matted uncouth huts  
Which, as the ships drew round each ragged cliff,  
Crept like remembered misery into sight;  
Oh, like the strange dull waking from a dream  
They blotted out the rosy courts and fair

## DRAKE

---

Imagined marble thresholds of the King  
Achilles and the heroes that were gone.  
But Drake cared nought for these things. Such  
a heart

He had, to make each utmost ancient bourne  
Of man's imagination but a point  
Of new departure for his Golden Dream.  
But Doughty with his men ashore, alone,  
Among the sparse wind-bitten groves of palm,  
Kindled their fears of all they must endure  
On that immense adventure. Nay, sometimes  
He hinted of a voyage far beyond  
All history and fable, far beyond  
Even that Void whence only two returned,—  
Columbus, with his men in mutiny;  
Magellan, who could only hound his crew  
Onward by threats of death, until they turned  
In horror from the Threat that lay before,  
Preferring to be hanged as mutineers  
Rather than venture farther. Nor indeed  
Did even Magellan at the last return;  
But, with all hell around him, in the clutch  
Of devils died upon some savage isle

## BOOK II

---

By poisonous black enchantment. Not in vain  
Were Doughty's words on that volcanic shore  
Among the stunted dark acacia trees,  
Whose heads, all bent one way by the trade-wind,  
Pointed Northeast by North, Southwest by West,  
Ambiguous sibyls that with wizened arms  
Mysteriously declared a twofold path,  
Homeward or onward. But aboard the ships,  
Among the hardier seamen, old Tom Moone,  
With one or two stout comrades, overbore  
All doubts and questionings with blither tales  
Of how they sailed to Darien and heard  
Nightingales in November all night long  
As down a coast like Paradise they cruised  
Through seas of lasting summer, Eden isles,  
Where birds like rainbows, butterflies like gems,  
And flowers like coloured fires o'er fairy creeks  
Floated and flashed beneath the shadowy palms;  
While ever and anon a bark canoe  
With naked Indian maidens flower-festooned  
Put out from shadowy coves, laden with fruit  
Ambrosial o'er the silken shimmering sea.  
And once a troop of nut-brown maidens came—

## D R A K E

---

So said Tom Moone, a twinkle in his eye—  
Swimming to meet them through the warm blue  
waves  
And wantoned through the water, like those  
nymphs  
Which one green April at the Mermaid Inn  
He heard Kit Marlowe mightily pourtray,  
Among his boon companions, in a song  
Of Love that swam the sparkling Hellespont  
Upheld by nymphs, not lovelier than these,—  
Though whiter yet not lovelier than these;  
For those like flowers, but these like rounded fruit  
Rosily ripening through the clear tides tossed  
From nut-brown breast and arm all round the ship  
The thousand-coloured spray. Shapely of limb  
They were; but as they laid their small brown  
hands  
Upon the ropes we cast them, Captain Drake  
Suddenly thundered at them and bade them pack  
For a troop of naughty wenches! At that tale  
A tempest of fierce laughter rolled around  
The foc'sle; but one boy from London town,  
A pale-faced prentice, run-away to sea,

## BOOK II

---

Asking why Drake had bidden them pack so soon,  
Tom Moone turned to him with his deep-sea  
growl,

“Because our Captain is no pink-eyed boy  
Nor soft-limbed Spaniard, but a staunch-souled  
Man,

Full-blooded; nerved like iron; with a girl  
He loves at home in Devon; and a mind  
For ever bent upon some mighty goal,  
I know not what—but 'tis enough for me  
To know my Captain knows.” And then he told  
How sometimes o'er the gorgeous forest gloom  
Some marble city, rich, mysterious, white,  
An ancient treasure-house of Aztec kings,  
Or palace of forgotten Incas gleamed;  
And in their dim rich lofty cellars gold,  
Beyond all wildest dreams, great bars of gold,  
Like pillars, tossed in mighty chaos, gold  
And precious stones, agate and emerald,  
Diamond, sapphire, ruby, and sardonyx.  
So said he, as they waited the return  
Of Doughty, resting in the foc'sle gloom,  
Or idly couched about the sun-swept decks

## D R A K E

---

On sails or coils of rope, while overhead  
Some boy would climb the rigging and look out,  
Arching his hand to see if Doughty came.  
But when he came, he came with a strange face  
Of feigned despair; and with a stammering tongue  
He vowed he could not find those poor supplies  
Which Drake himself in other days had found  
Upon that self-same island. But, perchance,  
This was a barren year, he said. And Drake  
Looked at him, suddenly, and at the musketeers.  
Their eyes were strained; their faces wore a cloud.  
That night he said no more; but on the morn,  
Mistrusting nothing, Drake with subtle sense  
Of weather-wisdom, through that little fleet  
Distributed his crews anew. And all  
The prisoners and the prizes at those isles  
They left behind them, taking what they would  
From out their carven cabins,—glimmering silks,  
Chiselled Toledo blades, and broad doubloons.  
And, lo! as they weighed anchor, far away  
Behind them on the blue horizon line  
It seemed a city of towering masts arose;  
And from the crow's nest of the *Golden Hynde*

## BOOK II

---

A seaman cried, "By God; the hunt is up!"  
And like a tide of triumph through their veins  
The red rejoicing blood began to race  
As there they saw the avenging ships of Spain,  
Eight mighty galleons, nosing out their trail.  
And Drake growled, "Oh, my lads of Bideford,  
It cuts my heart to show the hounds our heels;  
But we must not imperil our great quest!  
Such fights as that must wait—as our reward  
When we return. Yet I will not put on  
One stitch of sail. So, lest they are not too slow  
To catch us, clear the decks. God, I should like  
To fight them!" So the little fleet advanced  
With decks all cleared and shotted guns and men  
Bare-armed beside them, hungering to be caught,  
And quite distracted from their former doubts;  
For danger, in that kind, they never feared.  
But soon the heavy Spaniards dropped behind;  
And not in vain had Thomas Doughty sown  
The seeds of doubt; for many a brow grew black  
With sullen-seeming care that erst was gay.  
But happily and in good time there came,  
Not from behind them now, but right in front,

## DRAKE

---

On the first sun-down of their quest renewed,  
Just as the sea grew dark around their ships,  
A chance that loosed heart-gnawing doubt in  
deeds.

For through a mighty zone of golden haze  
Blotting the purple of the gathering night  
A galleon like a floating mountain moved  
To meet them, clad with sunset and with dreams.  
Her masts and spars immense in jewelled mist  
Shimmered: her rigging, like an emerald web  
Of golden spiders, tangled half the stars!  
Embodied sunset, dragging the soft sky  
O'er dazzled ocean, through the night she drew  
Out of the unknown lands; and round a prow  
That jutted like a moving promontory  
Over a cloven wilderness of foam,  
Upon a lofty blazoned scroll her name  
*San Salvador* challenged obsequious isles  
Where'er she rode; who kneeling like dark slaves  
Before some great Sultan must lavish forth  
From golden cornucopias, East and West,  
Red streams of rubies, cataracts of pearl.  
But, at a signal from their admiral, all

## BOOK II

---

Those five small ships lay silent in the gloom  
Which, just as if some god were on their side,  
Covered them in the dark troughs of the waves,  
Letting her pass to leeward. On she came,  
Blazing with lights, a City of the Sea,  
Belted with crowding towers and clouds of sail,  
And round her bows a long-drawn thunder rolled  
Splendid with foam; but ere she passed them by,  
Drake gave the word, and with one crimson flash  
Two hundred yards of black and hidden sea  
Leaped into sight between them as the roar  
Of twenty British cannon shattered the night.  
Then after her they drove, like black sea-wolves  
Behind some royal high-branched stag of ten,  
Hanging upon those bleeding foam-flecked flanks,  
Leaping, snarling, worrying, as they went  
In full flight down the wind; for those light ships  
Much speedier than their huge antagonist,  
Keeping to windward, worked their will with her.  
In vain she burnt wild lights and strove to scan  
The darkening deep. Her musketeers in vain  
Provoked the crackling night with random fires:  
In vain her broadside bellowings burst at large,

## DRAKE

---

As if the Gates of Erebus unrolled.  
For ever and anon the deep-sea gloom  
From some new quarter, like a dragon's mouth  
Opened and belched forth crimson flames and tore  
Her sides as if with iron claws unseen;  
Till, all at once, rough voices close at hand  
Out of the darkness thundered, "Grapple her!"  
And, falling on their knees, the Spaniards knew  
The Dragon of that red Apocalypse.  
There with one awful cry, *El Draque! El Draque!*  
They cast their weapons from them; for the moon  
Rose, eastward, and against her rising black  
Over the bloody bulwarks Francis Drake,  
Grasping the great hilt of his naked sword,  
Towered for a moment to their startled eyes  
Through all the zenith like the King of Hell.  
Then he leaped down upon their shining decks,  
And after him swarmed and towered and leapt in  
haste  
A brawny band of three score Englishmen,  
Gigantic as they loomed against the sky  
'And risen, it seemed, by miracle from the sea.  
So small were those five ships below the walls

## B O O K I I

---

Of that huge floating mountain. Royally  
Drake, from the swart commander's trembling  
hands

Took the surrendered sword, and bade his men  
Gather the fallen weapons on an heap,  
And placed a guard about them, while the moon  
Silvering the rolling seas for many a mile  
Glanced on the huddled Spaniards' rich attire,  
As like one picture of despair they grouped  
Under the splintered main-mast's creaking shrouds,  
And the great swinging shadows of the sails  
Mysteriously swept the gleaming decks;  
Where many a butt of useless cannon gloomed  
Along the accoutred bulwarks or upturned,  
As the ship wallowed in the heaving deep,  
Dumb mouths of empty menace to the stars.

Then Drake appointed Doughty, with a guard,  
To sail the prize on to the next dim isle  
Where they might leave her, taking aught they  
would

From out her carven cabins and rich holds.  
And Doughty's heart leaped in him as he thought,

## D R A K E

---

“I have my chance at last”; but Drake, who still  
Trusted the man, made surely doubly sure,  
And in his wary weather-wisdom sent—  
Even as a breathing type of friendship, sent—  
His brother, Thomas Drake, aboard the prize;  
But set his brother, his own flesh and blood,  
Beneath the man, as if to say, “I give  
My loyal friend dominion over me.”  
So courteously he dealt with him; but he,  
Seeing his chance once more slipping away,  
Raged inwardly and, from his own false heart  
Imputing his own evil, he contrived  
A cunning charge that night; and when they came  
Next day, at noon, upon the destined isle,  
He suddenly spat the secret venom forth,  
With such fierce wrath in his defeated soul  
That he himself almost believed the charge.  
For when Drake stepped on the *San Salvador*  
To order all things duly about the prize,  
What booty they must keep and what let go,  
Doughty received him with a blustering voice  
Of red mock-righteous wrath, “Is this the way  
Englishmen play the pirate, Francis Drake?

## BOOK II

---

While thou wast dreaming of thy hero's crown—  
God save the mark!—thy brother, nay, thy spy,  
Must play the common pilferer, must convert  
The cargo to his uses, rob us all  
Of what we risked our necks to win: he wears  
The ransom of an emperor round his throat  
That might enrich us all. Who saw him wear  
That chain of rubies ere last night?"

And Drake,  
"Answer him, brother"; and his brother smiled  
And answered, "Nay, I never wore this chain  
Before last night; but Doughty knows, indeed,  
For he was with me—and none else was there  
But Doughty—'tis my word against his word,  
That close on midnight we were summoned down  
To an English seaman who lay dying below  
Unknown to any of us, a prisoner  
In chains, that had been captured none knew where,  
For all his mind was far from Darien,  
And wandering evermore through Devon lanes  
At home; whom we released; and from his waist  
He took this hidden chain and gave it me,  
Begging me that if ever I returned

## D R A K E

---

To Bideford in Devon I would go  
With whatsoever wealth it might produce  
To his old mother, who, with wrinkled hands  
In some small white-washed cottage o'er the sea,  
Where wall-flowers bloom in April, even now  
Is turning pages of the well-worn Book  
And praying for her son's return, nor knows  
That he lies cold upon the heaving main.  
But this he asked; and this in all good faith  
I swore to do; and even now he died,  
And hurrying hither from his side I clasped  
His chain of rubies round my neck awhile,  
In full sight of the sun. I have no more  
To say." Then up spoke Hatton's trumpeter:  
"But I have more to say. Last night I saw  
Doughty, but not in full sight of the sun,  
Nor once, nor twice, but three times at the least,  
Carrying chains of gold, clusters of gems,  
And whatsoever wealth he could convey  
Into his cabin and smuggle in smallest space."  
"Nay," Doughty stammered, mixing sneer and lie,  
Yet bolstering up his courage with the thought  
That being what courtiers called a gentleman

## BOOK II

---

He ranked above the rude sea-discipline,  
“ Nay, they were free gifts from the Spanish crew  
Because I treated them with courtesy.”  
Then bluff Will Harvest, “ That perchance were  
true,  
For he hath been close closeted for hours  
With their chief officers, drinking their health  
In our own war-bought wine, while down below  
Their captured English seaman groaned his last.”  
Then Drake, whose utter silence, with a sense  
Of infinite power and justice, ruled their hearts,  
Suddenly thundered—and the traitor blanched  
And quailed before him. “ This my flesh and  
blood  
I placed beneath thee as my dearer self!  
But thou, in trampling on him, shalt not say  
I charge thy brother. Nay, thou chargest me!  
Against me only hast thou stirred this strife;  
And now, by God, shalt thou learn, once for all,  
That I, thy captain for this voyage, hold  
The supreme power of judgment in my hands.  
Get thee aboard my flagship! When I come  
I shall have more to say to thee; but thou,

## DRAKE

---

My brother, take this galleon in thy charge;  
For, as I see, she holdeth all the stores  
Which Doughty failed to find. She shall return  
With us to that New World from which she came.  
But now let these our prisoners all embark  
In yonder pinnace; let them all go free.  
I care not to be cumbered on my way  
Through dead Magellan's unattempted dream  
With chains and prisoners. In that Golden World  
Which means much more to me than I can speak,  
Much more, much more than I can speak or  
breathe,  
Being, behind whatever name it bears—  
Earthly Paradise, Island of the Saints,  
Cathay, or Zipangu, or Hy Brasil—  
The eternal symbol of my soul's desire,  
A sacred country shining on the sea,  
That Vision without which, the wise king said,  
A people perishes; in that place of hope,  
That Tirn'an Og, that land of lasting youth,  
Where whosoever sails with me shall drink  
Fountains of immortality and dwell  
Beyond the fear of death for evermore,

## B O O K   I I

---

There shall we see the dust of battle dance  
Everywhere in the sunbeam of God's peace!  
Oh, in the new Atlantis of my soul  
There are no captives: there the wind blows free;  
And, as in sleep, I have heard the marching song  
Of mighty peoples rising in the West,  
Wonderful cities that shall set their foot  
Upon the throat of all old tyrannies;  
And on the West wind I have heard a cry,  
The shoreless cry of the prophetic sea  
Heralding through that golden wilderness  
The Soul whose path our task is to make straight,  
Freedom, the last great Saviour of mankind.  
I know not what I know: these are wild words,  
Which as the sun draws out earth's morning mists  
Over dim fields where careless cattle sleep,  
Some visionary Light, unknown, afar,  
Draws from my darkling soul. Why should we  
drag  
Thither this Old-World weight of utter gloom,  
Or with the ballast of these heavy hearts  
Make sail in sorrow for Pacific Seas?  
Let us leave chains and prisoners to Spain;

## DRAKE

---

But set these free to make their own way home!"  
So said he, groping blindly towards the truth,  
And heavy with the treason of his friend.  
His face was like a king's face as he spake,  
For sorrows that strike deep reveal the deep;  
And through the gateways of a ragged wound  
Sometimes a god will drive his chariot wheels  
From some deep haven within the hearts of men.  
Nevertheless, the immediate seamen there  
Knowing how great a ransom they might ask  
For some among their prisoners, men of wealth  
And high degree, scarce liked to free them thus;  
And only saw in Drake's conflicting moods  
The moment's whim. "For little will he care,"  
They muttered, "when we reach those fabled  
shores,  
Whether his cannon break their golden peace."  
Yet to his face they murmured not at all;  
Because his eyes compelled them like a law.  
So there they freed the prisoners and set sail  
Across the earth-shaking shoulders of the broad  
Atlantic, and the great grey slumbrous waves  
Triumphantly swelled up to meet the keels.

## BOOK III

**N**OW in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
At dusk, Drake sent for Doughty.  
From one wall  
The picture of his love looked down  
on him;  
And on the table lay the magic chart,  
Drawn on a buffalo horn, all small peaked isles,  
Dwarf promontories, tiny twisted creeks,  
And fairy harbours under elfin hills,  
With marvellous inscriptions lined in red,—  
*As Here is Gold, or Many Rubies Here,*  
*Or Ware Witch-crafte, or Here is Cannibals.*  
For in his great simplicity the man  
Delighted in it, with the adventurous heart  
Of boyhood poring o'er some well-thumbed tale  
On blue Twelfth Night beside the crimson fire;  
And o'er him, like the vision of a boy  
In his first knighthood when, upon some hill  
Washed by the silver fringes of the sea,

## D R A K E

---

Amidst the purple heather he lies and reads  
Of Arthur and Avilion, like a star  
His love's pure face looked down. There Doughty  
came,  
Half fearful, half defiant, with a crowd  
Of jostling half-excuses on his lips,  
And one dark swarm of adders in his heart.  
For now what light of chivalry remained  
In Doughty's mind was thickening with a plot,  
Subtler and deadlier than the serpent's first  
Attempt on our first sire in Eden bower.  
Drake, with a countenance open as the sun,  
Received him, saying: "Forgive me, friend, for I  
Was hasty with thee. I wellnigh forgot  
Those large and liberal nights we two have passed  
In this old cabin, telling all our dreams  
And hopes, in friendship, o'er and o'er again.  
But Vicary, thy lawyer friend, hath been  
Pleading with me; and now I understand  
All; so forgive,—for thou art hasty too,  
And hast said things in passion which, 'fore God,  
I would not take from other men alive.  
But now—I understand. Thou shalt no more

## B O O K   III

---

Be vexed with a divided mastership.  
Indeed, I trust thee, Doughty; against all  
Appearances I trust thee. Wilt thou not  
Be friends with me? For now in ample proof  
Thou shalt take charge of this my *Golden Hynde*  
In all things, save of seamanship, which rests  
With the ship's master under my command.  
But I myself will sail upon the prize."

And with the word he gathered up the chart,  
Took down his lady's picture with a smile,  
Gripped Doughty's hand and left him, staring,  
sheer  
Bewildered with that magnanimity  
Of faith, throughout all shadows, in some light  
Unseen behind the shadows. Thus did Drake  
Give up his own fair cabin which he loved;  
Being, it seemed, a little travelling home,  
Fragrant with memories,—gave it, as he thought,  
In recompense to one whom he had wronged.  
For even as his mind must ever yearn  
To shores beyond the sunset, even so  
He yearned through all dark shadows to his friend,  
And with his greater nature striving still

## DRAKE

---

To comprehend the lesser, as the sky  
Embraces our low earth, he would adduce  
Justifications, thus: "These men of law  
Are trained to plead for any and every cause,  
To feign an indignation, or to prove  
The worse is better and that black is white!  
Small wonder that their passion goes astray:  
Ah God, there is one prayer for all of us—  
*Enter not into judgment with Thy servant!"*

Yet as his boat pulled tow'rd the Spanish prize  
Leaving the *Golden Hynde*, far off he heard  
A voice that chilled him, as the voice of Fate  
Crying like some old Bellman through the world.

### SONG

*Yes; oh, yes; if any seek  
Laughter flown or lost delight,  
Glancing eye or rosy cheek,  
Love shall claim his own to-night!  
Say, hath any lost a friend?  
Yes; oh, yes!  
Let his distress  
In my ditty find its end.*

## BOOK III

---

*Yes; oh, yes; here all is found!  
Kingly palaces await  
Each its rightful owner, crowned  
King and consecrate,  
Under the wet and wintry ground!  
Yes; oh, yes!  
There sure redress  
Lies where all is lost and found.*

And Doughty, though Drake's deed of kindness  
flashed  
A moment's kind contrition through his heart,  
Immediately, with all his lawyer's wit,  
True to the cause that hired him, laughed it by,  
And straight began to weave the treacherous web  
Of soft intrigue wherein he meant to snare  
The passions of his comrades. Night and day,  
As that small fleet drove onward o'er the deep,  
Cleaving the sunset with their bright black prows  
Or hunted by the red pursuing Dawn,  
He stirred between the high-born gentlemen  
(Whose white and jewelled hands, gallant in fight,  
And hearts remembering Cręy and Poictiers,

## DRAKE

---

Were of scant use in common seamanship),  
Between these and the men whose rough tarred  
    arms  
Were good at equal need in storm or war,  
Yet took a poorer portion of the prize,  
He stirred a subtle jealousy and fanned  
A fire that swiftly grew almost to hate.  
For when the seamen must take precedence  
Of loiterers on the deck—through half a word,  
Small, with intense device, like some fierce lens,  
He magnified their rude and blustering mode;  
Or urged some scented fop, whose idle brain  
Busied itself with momentary whims,  
To bid the master alter here a sail,  
Or there a rope; and, if the man refused,  
Doughty, at night, across the wine-cups, raved  
Against the rising insolence of the mob;  
And hinted Drake himself was half to blame,  
In words that seemed to say, “I am his friend,  
Or I should bid you think him all to blame.”  
So fierce indeed the strife became that once,  
While Chester, Doughty’s catspaw, played with  
    fire,

## BOOK III

---

The grim ship-master growled between his teeth,  
“ Remember, sir, remember, ere too late,  
Magellan’s mutinous vice-admiral’s end.”  
And Doughty heard, and with a boisterous laugh  
Slapped the old sea-dog on the back and said,  
“ The gallows are for dogs, not gentlemen!”  
Meanwhile his brother, sly John Doughty, sought  
To fan the seamen’s fear of the unknown world  
With whispers and conjectures; and, at night,  
He brought old books of Greek and Hebrew down  
Into the foc’sle, claiming by their aid  
A knowledge of Black Art, and power to tell  
The future, which he dreadfully displayed  
There in the flickering light of the oily lamp,  
Bending above their huge and swarthy palms  
And tracing them to many a grisly doom.

So many a night and day westward they plunged.  
The half-moon ripened to its mellow round,  
Dwindled again and ripened yet again.  
And there was nought around them but the grey  
Ruin and roar of huge Atlantic seas.  
And only like a memory of the world

## DRAKE

---

They left behind them rose the same great sun,  
And daily rolled his chariot through their sky,  
Whereof the skilled musicians made a song.

### SONG

The same sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,  
The same and none other,  
Wherever we be;  
With the same goal before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Ringed round with the sea.

When the breakers charged thundering  
In thousands all round us  
With a lightning of lances  
Uphurtled on high,  
When the stout ships were sundering  
A rapture hath crowned us,  
Like the wild light that dances  
On the crests that flash by.

## BOOK III

---

When the waters lay breathless  
Gazing at Hesper  
Guarding the golden  
Fruit of the tree,  
Heard we the deathless  
Wonderful whisper  
Wafting the olden  
Dream of the sea.

No land in the ring of it  
Now, all around us  
Only the splendid  
Resurging unknown!  
How should we sing of it?—  
This that hath found us  
By the great sun attended  
In splendour, alone.

Ah! the broad miles of it,  
White with the onset  
Of waves without number  
Warring for glee.  
Ah! the soft smiles of it

## DRAKE

---

Down to the sunset,  
Holy for slumber,  
The peace of the sea.

The wave's heart, exalted,  
Leaps forward to meet us,  
The sun on the sea-wave  
Lies white as the moon:  
The soft sapphire-vaulted  
Deep heaven smiles to greet us,  
Free sons of the free-wave  
All singing one tune.

*The same sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,  
The same and none other,  
Wherever we be;  
With the same goal before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Queen of the sea.*

'At last a faint-flushed April Dawn arose  
With milk-white arms upbinding golden clouds

## BOOK III

---

Of fragrant hair behind her lovely head;  
And, lo! before the bright black plunging prows  
The whole sea suddenly shattered into shoals  
Of rolling porpoises. Everywhere they tore  
The glittering water. Like a moving crowd  
Of black bright rocks washed smooth by foaming  
tides,

They thrilled the unconscious fancy of the crews  
With subtle, wild, and living hints of land.  
And soon Columbus' happy signals came,  
The signs that saved him when his mutineers  
Despaired at last and clamoured to return,—  
And there, with awe triumphant in their eyes,  
They saw, lazily tossing on the tide,  
A drift of seaweed and a berried branch,  
Which silenced them as if they had seen a Hand  
Writing with fiery letters on the deep.  
Then a black cormorant, vulture of the sea,  
With neck outstretched and one long ominous  
*honk*,  
Went hurtling past them to its unknown bourne.  
A mighty white-winged albatross came next;  
Then flight on flight of clamorous clang ing gulls;

## DRAKE

---

And last, a wild and sudden shout of “ Land ! ”  
Echoed from crew to crew across the waves.  
Then, dumb upon the rigging as they hung  
Staring at it, a menace chilled their blood.  
For like *Il Gran Nemico* of Dante, dark,  
Ay, coloured like a thunder-cloud, from North  
To South, in front, there slowly rose to sight  
A country like a dragon fast asleep  
Along the West, with wrinkled, purple wings  
Ending in ragged forests o'er its spine;  
And with great craggy claws out-thrust, that turned  
(As the dim distances dissolved their veils)  
To promontories bounding a huge bay.  
There o'er the hushed and ever shallower tide  
The staring ships drew nigh and thought, “ Is this  
The Dragon of our Golden Apple Tree,  
The guardian of the fruit of our desire,  
Which grows in gardens of the Hesperides,  
Where those three sisters weave a white-armed  
dance  
Around it everlasting, and sing  
Strange songs in a strange tongue that still convey  
Warning to heedful souls ? ” Nearer they drew,

## BOOK III

---

And now, indeed, from out a soft blue-grey  
Mingling of colours on that coast's deep flank  
There crept a garden of enchantment, height  
O'er height, a garden sloping from the hills,  
Wooded as with Aladdin's trees that bore  
All-coloured clustering gems instead of fruit;  
Now vaster as it grew upon their eyes,  
And like some Roman amphitheatre  
Cirque above mighty cirque all round the bay,  
With jewels and flowers ablaze on women's breasts  
Innumerably confounded and confused;  
While lovely faces flushed with lust of blood,  
Rank above rank upon their tawny thrones  
In soft barbaric splendour lapped, and lulled  
By the low thunderings of a thousand lions,  
Luxuriously smiled as they bent down  
Over the scarlet-splashed and steaming sands  
To watch the white-limbed gladiators die.

Such fears and dreams for Francis Drake, at least,  
Rose and dissolved in his nigh fevered brain  
As they drew near that equatorial shore;  
For rumours had been borne to him; and now

## DRAKE

---

He knew not whether to impute the wrong  
To his untrustful mind or to believe  
Doughty a traitorous liar; for the sense  
Of his own friendship towards him made it hard  
To understand that treachery; yet there seemed  
Proof and to spare. A thousand shadows rose  
To mock him with their veiled indicative hands.  
And each alone he laid and exorcised  
With ease; but ah, not all, not all at once.  
And for each doubt he banished, one returned  
From darker depths to mock him o'er again.

So, in that bay, the little fleet sank sail  
And anchored; and the wild reality  
Behind those dreams towered round them on the  
hills,  
Or so it seemed. And Drake bade lower a boat,  
And went ashore with sixteen men to seek  
Water; and, as they neared the embowered beach,  
Over the green translucent tide there came,  
A hundred yards from land, a drowsy sound  
Immeasurably repeated and prolonged,  
As of innumerable elfin drums

## BOOK III

---

Dreamily mustering in the tropic bloom.  
This from without they heard, across the waves;  
But when they glided into a flowery creek  
Under the sharp black shadows of the trees—  
Jaca and Mango and Palm and red festoons  
Of garlanded Liana wreaths—it ebbed  
Into the murmur of the mighty fronds,  
Prodigious leaves whose veinings bore the fresh  
Impression of the finger-prints of God.  
There humming-birds, like flakes of purple fire  
Upon some passing seraph's plumage, beat  
And quivered in blinding blots of golden light  
Between the embattled cactus and cardoon;  
While one huge whisper of primæval awe  
Seemed to await the cool green eventide  
When God should walk His Garden as of old.  
Now as the boats were plying to and fro  
Between the ships and that enchanted shore,  
Drake bade his comrades tarry a little and went  
Apart, alone, into the trackless woods.  
Tormented with his thoughts, he saw all round  
Once more the battling image of his mind,  
Where there was nought of man, only the vast

## D R A K E

---

Unending silent struggle of Titan trees,  
Large internecine twistings of the world,  
The hushed death-grapple and the still intense  
Locked anguish of Laocoöns that gripped  
Death by the throat for thrice three hundred years.  
Once, like a subtle mockery overhead,  
Some black-armed chattering ape swung swiftly by,  
But he strode onward, thinking—"Was it false,  
False all that kind outreaching of the hands?  
False? Was there nothing certain, nothing sure  
In those divinest aisles and towers of Time  
Wherin we took sweet counsel? Is there nought  
Sure but the solid dust beneath our feet?  
Must all those lovelier fabrics of the soul,  
Being so divinely bright and delicate,  
Waver and shine no longer than some poor  
Prismatic airy bubble? Ay, they burst,  
And all their glory shrinks into one tear  
No bitterer than some idle love-lorn maid  
Sheds for her dead canary. God, it hurts,  
This, this hurts most, to think how we must miss  
What might have been, for nothing but a breath,  
A babbling of the tongue, an argument,

## BOOK III

---

Or such a poor contention as involves  
The thrones and dominations of this earth,—  
How many of us, like seed on barren ground,  
Must miss the flower and harvest of their prayers,  
The living light of friendship and the grasp  
Which for its very meaning once implied  
Eternities of utterance and the life  
Immortal of two souls beyond the grave?"

Now, wandering upward ever, he reached and  
clomb  
The slope side of a fern-fringed precipice,  
And, at the summit, found an open glade,  
Whence, looking o'er the forest, he beheld  
The sea; and, in the land-locked bay below,  
Far, far below, his elfin-tiny ships,  
All six at anchor on the crawling tide!  
Then onward, upward, through the woods once  
more  
He plunged with bursting heart and burning brow;  
And, once again, like madness, the black shapes  
Of doubt swung through his brain and chattered  
and laughed,

## D R A K E

---

Till he upstretched his arms in agony  
And cursed the name of Doughty, cursed the day  
They met, cursed his false face and courtier  
smiles;

“For oh,” he cried, “how easy a thing it were  
For truth to wear the garb of truth! This proves  
His treachery!” And there, at once, his thoughts  
Tore him another way, as thus, “And yet  
If he were false, is he not subtle enough  
To hide it? Why, this proves his innocence—  
This very courtly carelessness which I,  
Black-hearted evil-thinker as I am,  
In my own clumsier spirit so misjudge!  
These children of the court are butterflies  
Fluttering hither and thither, and I—poor fool—  
Would fix them to a stem and call them flowers,  
Nay, bid them grasp the ground-like towering oaks  
And shadow all the zenith;” and yet again  
The madness of distrustful friendship gleamed  
From his fierce eyes, “Oh, villain, damnèd villain,  
God’s murrain on his heart! I know full well  
He hides what he can hide! He wears no fault  
Upon the gloss and frippery of his breast!

## BOOK III

---

It is not that! It is the hidden things,  
Unseizable, the things I do not know:  
Ay, it is these, these, these and these alone  
That I mistrust."

And, as he walked, the skies  
Grew full of threats, and now enormous clouds  
Rose mammoth-like above the ensanguined deep,  
Trampling the daylight out; and, with its death  
Dyed purple, rushed along as if they meant  
To obliterate the world. He took no heed.  
Though that strange blackness brimmed the  
branching aisles  
With horror, he strode on till in the gloom,  
Just as his winding way came out once more  
Over a precipice that o'erlooked the bay,  
There, as he went, not gazing down, but up,  
He saw what seemed a ponderous granite cliff,  
A huge ribbed shell upon a lonely shore  
Left by forgotten mountains when they sank  
Back to earth's breast like billows on a sea.  
A tall and whispering crowd of tree-ferns waved  
Mysterious fringes round it. In their midst  
He flung himself at its broad base, with one

## D R A K E

---

Sharp shivering cry of pain, “ Show me Thy ways,  
O God, teach me Thy paths! I am in the dark!  
Lighten my darkness! ”

‘ Almost as he spoke  
There swept across the forest, far and wide,  
Gathering power and volume as it came,  
A sound as of a rushing mighty wind;  
And, overhead, like great black gouts of blood  
Wrung from the awful forehead of the Night  
The first drops fell and ceased. Then, suddenly,  
Out of the darkness, earth with all her seas,  
Her little ships at anchor in the bay  
(Five ebony ships upon a sheet of silver,  
Drake saw not that, indeed, Drake saw not that!),  
Her woods, her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest  
twigs,  
Leapt like a hunted stag through one immense  
Lightning of revelation into the murk  
Of Erebus: then heaven o'er rending heaven  
Shattered and crashed down ruin over the world.  
But, in that deeper darkness, Francis Drake  
Stood upright now, and with blind outstretched  
arms  
Groped at that strange forgotten cliff and shell

## B O O K III

---

Of mystery; for in that flash of light  
Æons had passed; and now the Thing in front  
Made his blood freeze with memories that lay  
Behind his Memory. In the gloom he groped,  
And with dark hands that knew not what they  
knew,

As one that shelters in the night, unknowing,  
Beneath a stranded shipwreck, with a cry  
He touched the enormous rain-washed belted ribs  
And bones like battlements of some Mastodon  
Embedded there until the trump of doom.

'After long years, long centuries, perchance,  
Triumphantly some other pioneer  
Would stand where Drake now stood and read the  
tale

Of ages where he only felt the cold  
Touch in the dark of some huge mystery;  
Yet Drake might still be nearer to the light  
Who now was whispering from his great deep  
heart,

"Show me Thy ways, O God, teach me Thy  
paths!"

And there by some strange instinct, oh, he felt

## DRAKE

---

God's answer there, as if he grasped a hand  
Across a gulf of twice ten thousand years;  
And he regained his lost magnificence  
Of faith in that great Harmony which resolves  
Our discords, faith through all the ruthless laws  
Of nature in their lovely pitilessness,  
Faith in that Love which outwardly must wear,  
Through all the sorrows of eternal change,  
The splendour of the indifference of God.

All round him through the heavy purple gloom  
Sloped the soft rush of silver-arrowed rain,  
Loosening the skies' hard anguish as with tears.  
Once more he felt his unity with all  
The vast composure of the universe,  
And drank deep at the fountains of that peace  
Which comprehends the tumult of our days.  
But with that peace the power to act returned;  
And, with his back against the Mastodon,  
He stared through the great darkness tow'rds the  
sea.

The rain ceased for a moment: only the slow  
Drip of the dim droop-feathered palms all round

## BOOK III

---

Deepened the hush.

Then, out of the gloom once more  
The whole earth leapt to sight with all her woods,  
Her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest twigs distinct  
For one wild moment; but Drake only saw  
The white flash of her seas, and there, oh there  
That land-locked bay with those five elfin ships,  
Five elfin ebony ships upon a sheet  
Of wrinkled silver! Then, as the thunder  
followed,

One thought burst through his brain—

*Where was the sixth?*

Over the grim precipitous edge he hung,  
An eagle waiting for the lightning now  
To swoop upon his prey. One iron hand  
Gripped a rough tree-root like a bunch of snakes;  
And, as the rain rushed round him, far away  
He saw to northward yet another flash,  
A scribble of God's finger in the sky  
Over a waste of white stampeding waves.  
His eye flashed like a falchion as he saw it,  
And from his lips there burst the sea-king's laugh;  
For there, with a fierce joy he knew, he knew

## DRAKE

---

Doughty, at last—an open mutineer!  
An open foe to fight! Ay, there she went,—  
His *Golden Hynde*, his little *Golden Hynde*  
A wild deserter scudding to the North.  
And, almost ere the lightning, Drake had gone  
Crashing down the face of the precipice,  
By a narrow water-gully, and through the huge  
Forest he tore the straight and perilous way  
Down to the shore; while, three miles to the  
North,  
Upon the wet poop of the *Golden Hynde*  
Doughty stood smiling. Scarce would he have  
smiled  
Knowing that Drake had seen him from that tower  
Amidst the thunders; but, indeed, he thought  
He had escaped unseen amidst the storm.  
Many a day he had worked upon the crew,  
Fanning their fears and doubts until he won  
The more part to his side. And when they  
reached  
That coast, he showed them how Drake meant to  
sail  
Southward, into the unknown Void; but he

## BOOK III

---

Would have them suddenly slip by stealth away  
Northward to Darien, showing them what a life  
Of golden glory waited for them there,  
If, laying aside this empty quest, they joined  
The merry feasters round those island fires  
Which over many a dark-blue creek illumed  
Buccaneer camps in scarlet logwood groves,  
Fringing the Gulf of Mexico, till dawn  
Summoned the Black Flags out to sweep the sea.

But when Drake reached the flower-embowered  
boat  
And found the men awaiting his return  
There, in a sheltering grove of bread-fruit trees  
Beneath great eaves of leafage that obscured  
Their sight, but kept the storm out, as they tossed  
Pieces of eight or rattled the bone dice,  
His voice went through them like a thunderbolt,  
For none of them had seen the *Golden Hynde*  
Steal from the bay; and now the billows burst  
Like cannon down the coast; and they had thought  
Their boat could not be launched until the storm  
Abated. Under Drake's compelling eyes,

## D R A K E

---

Nevertheless, they poled her down the creek  
Without one word, waiting their chance.

Then all

Together with their brandished oars they thrust,  
And on the fierce white out-draught of a wave  
They shot up, up and over the toppling crest  
Of the next, and plunged crashing into the vale  
Behind it: then they settled at their thwarts,  
'And the fierce water boiled before their blades  
'As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,  
They soared and crashed across the rolling seas.

Not for the Spanish prize did Drake now steer,  
But for that little ship the *Marygold*,  
Swiftest of sail, next to the *Golden Hynde*,  
'And, in the hands of Francis Drake, indeed  
Swiftest of all; and ere the seamen knew  
What power, as of a wind, bore them along,  
Anchor was up, their hands were on the sheets,  
The sails were broken out, the *Marygold*  
Was flying like a storm-cloud to the North,  
And on her poop an iron statue still  
As death stood Francis Drake.

## BOOK III

---

One hour they rushed  
Northward, with green seas washing o'er the deck  
And buffeted with splendour; then they saw  
The *Golden Hynde* like some wing-broken gull  
With torn mismanaged plumes beating the air  
In peril of utter shipwreck; saw her fly  
Half-mast, a feeble signal of distress  
Despite all Doughty's curses; for her crew  
With wild divisions torn amongst themselves  
Most gladly now surrendered in their hearts,  
As close alongside grandly onward swept  
The *Marygold*, with canvas trim and taut  
Magnificently drawing the full wind,  
Her gunners waiting at their loaded guns  
Bare-armed and silent; and that iron soul  
Alone, upon her silent quarter-deck.  
There they hauled up into the wind and lay  
Rocking, while Drake, alone, without a guard,  
Boarding the runaway, dismissed his boat  
Back to the *Marygold*. Then his voice outrang  
Trumpet-like o'er the trembling mutineers,  
And clearly, as if they were but busied still  
About the day's routine. They hid their shame,

## D R A K E

---

As men that would propitiate a god,  
By flying to fulfil his lightest word;  
And ere they knew what power, as of a wind  
Impelled them—that half wreck was trim and  
taut,  
Her sails all drawing and her bows afoam;  
And, creeping past the *Marygold* once more,  
She led their Southward way! And not till then  
Did Drake vouchsafe one word to the white face  
Of Doughty, as he furtively slunk nigh  
With some new lie upon his fear-parched lips  
Thirsting for utterance in his crackling laugh  
Of deprecation; and with one ruffling puff  
Of pigeon courage in his blinded soul—  
“I am no sea-dog—even Francis Drake  
Would scarce misuse a gentleman. Thank God  
I am a gentleman!” And there Drake turned  
And summoned four swart seamen out by name.  
His words went like a cold wind through their  
flesh  
As with a passionless voice he slowly said,  
“Take ye this fellow: bind him to the mast  
Until what time I shall decide his fate.”

## BOOK III

---

And Doughty gasped as at the world's blank  
end,—

“ Nay, Francis,” cried he, “ wilt thou thus misuse  
A gentleman ? ” But as the seamen gripped  
His arms he struggled vainly and furiously  
To throw them off ; and in his impotence  
Let slip the whole of his treacherous cause and  
hope .

In empty wrath,—“ Fore God,” he foamed and  
snarled,

“ Ye shall all smart for this when we return !  
Unhand me, dogs ! I have Lord Burleigh’s power  
Behind me. There is nothing I have done  
Without his warrant ! Ye shall smart for this !  
Unhand me, I say, unhand me ! ”

And in one flash  
Drake saw the truth, and Doughty saw his eyes  
Lighten upon him ; and his false heart quailed  
Once more ; and he suddenly suffered himself  
Quietly, strangely, to be led away  
And bound without a murmur to the mast.  
And strangely Drake remembered, as those words,  
“ Ye shall all smart for this when we return ,”

## D R A K E

---

Yelped at his faith, how while the Dover cliffs  
Faded from sight he leaned to his new friend  
Doughty and said: "I blame them not who stay!  
I blame them not at all who cling to home,  
For many of us, indeed, shall not return,  
Nor ever know that sweetness any more."

And when they had reached their anchorage anew,  
Drake, having now resolved to bring his fleet  
Beneath a more compact control, at once  
Took all the men and the chief guns and stores  
From out the Spanish prize; and sent Tom Moone  
To set the hulk afire. Also he bade  
Unbind the traitor and ordered him aboard  
The pinnace *Christopher*. John Doughty, too,  
He ordered thither, into the grim charge  
Of old Tom Moone, thinking it best to keep  
The poisonous leaven carefully apart  
Until they had won well Southward, to a place  
Where, finally committed to their quest,  
They might arraign the traitor without fear  
Or favour, and acquit him or condemn.  
But those two brothers, doubting as the false



WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURLEIGH

*From the Original Painting by Mark Gerard*



## BOOK III

---

Are damned to doubt, saw murder in his eyes,  
And thought "He means to sink the smack one  
night,"

And they refused to go, till Drake abruptly  
Ordered them straightway to be slung on board  
With ropes.

The daylight waned; but ere the sun  
Sank, the five ships were plunging to the South;  
For Drake would halt no longer, lest the crews  
Also should halt betwixt two purposes.  
He took the tide of fortune at the flood;  
And onward through the now subsiding storm,  
Ere they could think what power as of a wind  
Impelled them, he had swept them on their way.  
Far, far into the night they saw the blaze  
That leapt in crimson o'er the abandoned hulk  
Behind them, like a mighty hecatomb  
Marking the path of some Titanic will.  
Many a night and day they Southward drove.  
Sometimes at midnight round them all the sea  
Quivered with witches' oils and water-snakes,  
Green, blue, and red, with lambent tongues of fire.  
Mile upon mile about the blurred black hulls

## DRAKE

---

'A cauldron of tempestuous colour coiled.  
On every mast mysterious meteors burned,  
'And from the shores a bellowing rose and fell  
As of great bestial gods that walked all night  
Through some wild hell unknown, too vast for  
men;  
But when the silver and crimson of the dawn  
Broke out, they saw the tropic shores anew,  
The fair white foam, and, round about the rocks,  
Weird troops of tusked sea-lions; and the world  
Mixed with their dreams and made them stranger  
still.  
'And, once, so fierce a tempest scattered the fleet  
That even the hardiest souls began to think  
There was a Jonah with them; for the seas  
Rose round them like green mountains, peaked and  
ridged  
With heights of Alpine snow amongst the clouds;  
'And many a league to Southward, when the ships  
Gathered again amidst the sinking waves  
Four only met. The ship of Thomas Drake  
Was missing; and some thought it had gone down  
With all hands in the storm. But Francis Drake

## BOOK III

---

Held on his way, learning from hour to hour  
To merge himself in immortality;  
Learning the secret of those pitiless laws  
Which dwarf all mortal grief, all human pain,  
To something less than nothing by the side  
Of that eternal travail dimly guessed,  
Since first he felt in the miraculous dark  
The great bones of the Mastodon, that hulk  
Of immemorial death. He learned to judge  
The passing pageant of this outward world  
As by the touch-stone of that memory;  
Even as in that country which some said  
Lay now not far, the great Tezcucan king,  
Resting his jewelled hand upon a skull,  
And on a smouldering glory of jewels throned  
There in his temple of the Unknown God  
Over the host of Aztec princes, clad  
In golden hauberks gleaming under soft  
Surcoats of green or scarlet feather-work,  
Could in the presence of a mightier power  
Than life or death give up his guilty sons,  
His only sons, to the sacrificial sword.  
And hour by hour the soul of Francis Drake,

## DRAKE

---

Unconscious as an oak-tree of its growth,  
Increased in strength and stature as he drew  
Earth, heaven, and hell within him, more and  
more.

For as the dream we call our world, with all  
Its hues is but a picture in the brain,  
So did his soul enfold the universe  
With gradual sense of superhuman power,  
While every visible shape within the vast  
Horizon seemed the symbol of some thought  
Waiting for utterance. He had found indeed  
God's own Nirvana, not of empty dream  
But of intensest life! Nor did he think  
Aught of all this; but, as the rustic deems  
The colours that he carries in his brain  
Are somehow all outside him while he peers  
Unaltered through two windows in his face,  
Drake only knew that as the four ships plunged  
Southward, the world mysteriously grew  
More like a prophet's vision, hour by hour,  
Fraught with dark omens and significances,  
A world of hieroglyphs and sacred signs  
Wherein he seemed to read the truth that lay

## BOOK III

---

Hid from the Roman augurs when of old  
They told the future from the flight of birds.  
How vivid with disaster seemed the flight  
Of those blood-red flamingoes o'er the dim  
Blue steaming forest, like two terrible thoughts  
Flashing, unapprehended, through his brain!

And now, as they drove Southward, day and night,  
Through storm and calm, the shores that fleeted by  
Grew wilder, grander, with his growing soul,  
And pregnant with the approaching mystery.  
And now along the Patagonian coast  
They cruised, and in the solemn midnight saw  
Wildernesses of shaggy, barren marl,  
Petrified seas of lava, league on league,  
Craters and bouldered slopes and granite cliffs  
With ragged rents, grim gorges, deep ravines,  
And precipice on precipice up-piled  
Innumerable to those dim distances  
Where, over valleys hanging in the clouds,  
Gigantic mountains and volcanic peaks  
Catching the wefts of cirrus fleece appeared  
To smoke against the sky, though all was now

## DRAKE

---

Dead as that frozen chaos of the moon,  
Or some huge passion of a slaughtered soul  
Prostrate under the marching of the stars.

'At last, and in a silver dawn, they came  
Suddenly on a broad-winged estuary,  
And, in the midst of it, an island lay.  
There they found shelter, on its leeward side,  
And Drake convened upon the *Golden Hynde*  
His dread court-martial. Two long hours he  
heard  
Defence and accusation, then broke up  
The conclave, and, with burning heart and brain,  
Feverishly seeking everywhere some sign  
To guide him, went ashore upon that isle,  
And, lo! turning a rugged point of rock,  
He rubbed his eyes to find out if he dreamed,  
For there—a Crusoe's wonder, a miracle,  
A sign—before him stood on that lone strand  
Stark, with a stern arm pointing out his way  
'And jangling still one withered skeleton,  
The grim black gallows where Magellan hanged  
His mutineers. Its base was white with bones

## BOOK III

---

Picked by the gulls, and crumbling o'er the sand  
A dread sea-salt, dry from the tides of time.  
There, on that lonely shore, Death's finger-post  
Stood like some old forgotten truth made strange  
By the long lapse of many memories,  
All starting up in resurrection now  
As at the trump of doom, heroic ghosts  
Out of the cells and graves of his deep brain  
Reproaching him. "*Were this man not thy friend,*  
*Ere now he should have died the traitor's death.*  
*What wilt thou say to the others if they, too,*  
*Prove false? Or wilt thou slay the lesser and save*  
*The greater sinner? Nay, if thy right hand*  
*Offend thee, cut it off!*" And, in one flash,  
Drake saw his path and chose it.

With a voice

Low as the passionless anguished voice of Fate  
That comprehends all pain, but girds it round  
With iron, lest some random cry break out  
For man's misguidance, he drew all his men  
Around him, saying, "Ye all know how I loved  
Doughty, who hath betrayed me twice, and thrice,  
For I still trusted him: he was no felon

## DRAKE

---

That I should turn my heart away from him !  
He is the type and image of man's laws ;  
While I—am lawless as the soul that still  
Must sail and seek a world beyond the worlds,  
A law behind earth's laws. I dare not judge !  
But ye—who know the mighty goal we seek,  
Who have seen him sap our courage, hour by hour,  
Till God Himself almost appeared a dream  
Behind his technicalities and doubts  
Of aught he could not touch or handle ; ye  
Who have seen him stir up jealousy and strife  
Between our seamen and our gentlemen,  
Even as the world stirs up continual strife,  
Bidding the man forget he is a man  
With God's own patent of nobility ;  
Ye who have seen him strike this last sharp blow—  
Sharper than any enemy hath struck,—  
Ay, Jonathan, mine own familiar friend,  
He whom I trusted, he alone could strike  
So sharply, for indeed I loved this man.  
Judge ye—for see, I cannot. Do not doubt  
I loved this man !  
But now, if ye will let him have his life,

## BOOK III

---

Oh, speak! But, if ye think it must be death,  
Hold up your hands in silence!" His voice  
dropped,

And eagerly he whispered forth one word  
Beyond the scope of Fate—" Yet, oh, my friends,  
I would not have him die!" There was no sound  
Save the long thunder of eternal seas,—  
Drake bowed his head and prayed.

Then, suddenly,  
One man upheld his hand; and, all at once,  
A brawny forest of brown arms arose  
In silence, and the great sea whispered *Death*.

. . . . .

There, with one big swift impulse, Francis Drake  
Held out his right sun-blackened hand and gripped  
The hand that Doughty proffered him; and, lo!  
Doughty laughed out and said, " Since I must die,  
Let us have one more hour of comradeship,  
One hour as old companions. Let us make  
A feast here, on this island, ere I go  
Where there is no more feasting." So they made  
A great and solemn banquet as the day  
Decreased; and Doughty bade them all unlock

## D R A K E

---

Their sea-chests and bring out their rich array.  
There, by that wondering ocean of the West,  
In crimson doublets, lined and slashed with gold,  
In broidered lace and double golden chains  
Embossed with rubies and great cloudy pearls  
They feasted, gentleman adventurers,  
Drinking old malmsey, as the sun sank down.

Now Doughty, fronting the rich death of day,  
And flourishing a silver pouncet-box  
With many a courtly jest and rare conceit,  
There as he sat in rich attire, outbraved  
The rest. Though darker-hued, yet richer far,  
His murrey-coloured doublet double-piled  
Of Genoa velvet, puffed with ciprus, shone;  
For over its grave hues the gems that bossed  
His golden collar, wondrously relieved,  
Blazed lustrous to the West like stars. But Drake  
Wore simple black, with midnight silver slashed,  
And, at his side, a great two-handed sword.  
At last they rose, just as the sun's last rays  
Rested upon the heaving molten gold  
Immeasurable. The long slow sigh of the waves

## BOOK III

---

That creamed across the lonely time-worn reef  
All round the island seemed the very voice  
Of the Everlasting : black against the sea  
The gallows of Magellan stretched its arm  
With that gaunt skeleton and its rusty chain  
Creaking and swinging in the solemn breath  
Of eventide like some strange pendulum  
Measuring out the moments that remained.  
There did they take the holy sacrament  
Of Jesus' body and blood. Then Doughty and  
Drake  
Kissed each other, as brothers, on the cheek;  
And Doughty knelt; and Drake, without one  
word,  
Leaning upon the two-edged naked sword  
Stood at his side, with iron lips, and eyes  
Full of the sunset; while the doomed man bowed  
His head upon a rock. The great sun dropped  
Suddenly, and the land and sea were dark;  
And as it were a sign, Drake lifted up  
The gleaming sword. It seemed to sweep the  
heavens  
Down in its arc as he smote, once, and no more.

## DRAKE

---

Then, for a moment, silence froze their veins,  
Till one fierce seaman stooped with a hoarse cry;  
And, like an eagle clutching up its prey,  
His arm swooped down and bore the head aloft,  
Gorily streaming, by the long dark hair;  
And a great shout went up, "So perish all  
Traitors to God and England!" Then Drake  
turned

And bade them to their ships; and, wondering,  
They left him. As the boats thrust out from shore  
Brave old Tom Moone looked back with faithful  
eyes

Like a great mastiff to his master's face.  
He, looming larger from his loftier ground  
Clad with the slowly gathering night of stars  
And gazing seaward o'er his quiet dead,  
Seemed like some Titan bronze in grandeur based  
Unshakeable until the crash of doom  
Shattered the black foundations of the world.

## BOOK IV

D 'AWN, everlasting and almighty Dawn,  
Hailed by ten thousand names of  
death and birth,  
Who, chiefly by thy name of Sorrow,  
seem'st

To half the world a sunset, God's great Dawn,  
Fair light of all earth's partings till we meet  
Where Dawn and sunset, mingling East and West,  
Shall make in some deep Orient of the soul  
One radiant Rose of Love for evermore;  
Teach me, oh teach to bear thy broadening light,  
Thy deepening wonder, lest as old dreams fade  
With love's unfaith, like wasted hours of youth  
And dim illusions vanish in thy beam,  
Their rapture and their anguish break that heart  
Which loved them, and must love for ever now.  
Let thy great sphere of splendour, ring by ring  
For ever widening, draw new seas, new skies,  
Within my ken; yet, as I still must bear  
This love, help me to grow in spirit with thee.

## DRAKE

---

Dawn on my song which trembles like a cloud  
Pierced with thy beauty. Rise, shine, as of old  
Across the wondering ocean in the sight  
Of those world-wandering mariners, when earth  
Rolled flat up to the Gates of Paradise,  
And each slow mist that curled its gold away  
From each new sea they furrowed into pearl  
Might bring before their blinded mortal eyes  
God and the Glory. Lighten as on the soul  
Of him that all night long in torment dire,  
'Anguish and thirst unceasing for thy ray  
Upon that lonely Patagonian shore  
Had lain as on the bitterest coasts of Hell.  
For all night long, mocked by the dreadful peace  
Of world-wide seas that darkly heaved and sank  
With cold recurrence, like the slow sad breath  
Of a fallen Titan dying all alone  
In lands beyond all human loneliness,  
While far and wide glimmers that broken targe  
Hurled from tremendous battle with the gods,  
And, as he breathes in pain, the chain-mail rings  
Round his broad breast a muffled rattling make  
For many a league, so seemed the sound of waves

## BOOK IV

---

Upon those beaches—there, be-mocked all night,  
Beneath Magellan's gallows, Drake had watched  
Beside his dead; and over him the stars  
Paled as the silver chariot of the moon  
Drove, and her white steeds ramped in a fury of  
foam

On splendid peaks of cloud. The *Golden Hynde*  
Slept with those other shadows on the bay.  
Between him and his home the Atlantic heaved;  
And, on the darker side, across the strait  
Of starry sheen that softly rippled and flowed  
Betwixt the mainland and his isle, it seemed  
Death's Gates indeed burst open. The night  
yawned

Like a foul wound. Black shapes of the outer  
dark

Poured out of forests older than the world;  
And, just as reptiles that take form and hue,  
Speckle and blotch, in strange assimilation  
From thorn and scrub and stone and the waste  
earth

Through which they crawl, so that almost they  
seem

## DRAKE

---

The incarnate spirits of their wilderness,  
Were these most horrible kindred of the night.  
Æonian glooms unfathomable, grim aisles,  
Grotesque, distorted boughs and dancing shades  
Outbelched their dusky brood on the dim shore;  
Monsters with sooty limbs, red-raddled eyes,  
And faces painted yellow, women and men;  
Fierce naked giants howling to the moon,  
And loathlier Gorgons with long, snaky tresses  
Pouring vile purple over pendulous breasts  
Like wine-bags. On the mainland beach they lit  
A brushwood fire that reddened creek and cove  
And lapped their swarthy limbs with hideous  
tongues  
Of flame; so near that by their light Drake saw  
The blood upon the dead man's long black hair  
Clotting corruption. The fierce funeral pyre  
Of all things fair seemed rolling on that shore;  
And in that dull, red battle of smoke and flame,  
While the sea crunched the pebbles, and dark  
drums  
Rumbled out of the gloom as if this earth  
Had some Titanic tigress for a soul  
Purring in forests of Eternity

## BOOK IV

---

Over her own grim dreams, his lonely spirit  
Passed through the circles of a world-wide waste  
Darker than ever Dante roamed. No gulf  
Was this of fierce harmonious reward,  
Where Evil moans in anguish after death,  
Where all men reap as they have sown, where  
gluttons

Gorge upon toads and usurers gulp hot streams  
Of molten gold. This was that Malebolge  
Which hath no harmony to mortal ears,  
But seems the reeling and tremendous dream  
Of some omnipotent madman. There he saw  
The naked giants dragging to the flames  
Young captives hideous with a new despair:  
He saw great craggy blood-stained stones  
upheaved

To slaughter, saw through mists of blood and fire  
The cannibal feast prepared, saw filthy hands  
Rend limb from limb, and almost dreamed he saw  
Foul mouths a-drip with quivering human flesh  
And horrible laughter in the crimson storm  
That climb and leapt and stabbed at the high  
heaven  
Till the whole night seemed saturate with red.

## D R A K E

---

And all night long upon the *Golden Hynde*,  
A cloud upon the waters, brave Tom Moone  
Watched o'er the bulwarks for some dusky plunge  
To warn him if that savage crew should mark  
His captain and swim over to his isle.  
Whistle in hand he watched, his boat well ready,  
His men low-crouched around him, swarthy faces  
Grim-chinned upon the taffrail, muttering oaths  
That trampled down the fear i' their bristly  
throats,  
While at their sides a dreadful hint of steel  
Sent stray gleams to the stars. But little heed  
Had Drake of all that menaced him, though oft  
Some wandering giant, belching from the feast,  
All blood-besmeared, would come so near he heard  
His heavy breathing o'er the narrow strait.  
Yet little care had Drake, for though he sat  
Bowed in the body above his quiet dead,  
His burning spirit wandered through the wastes,  
Wandered through hells behind the apparent hell,  
Horrors immeasurable, clutching at dreams  
Found fair of old, but now most foul. The world  
Leered at him through its old remembered mask

## BOOK IV

---

Of beauty: the green grass that clothed the fields  
Of England ('shallow, shallow fairy dream!')  
What was it but the hair of dead men's graves,  
Rooted in death, enriched with all decay?  
And like a leprosy the hawthorn bloom  
Crawled o'er the whitening bosom of the spring;  
And bird and beast and insect, ay and man,  
How fat they fed on one another's blood!  
And Love, what faith in Love, when spirit and  
flesh  
Are found of such a filthy composition?  
And Knowledge, God, his mind went reeling back  
To that dark voyage on the deadly coast  
Of Panama, where one by one his men  
Sickened and died of some unknown disease,  
Till Joseph, his own brother, in his arms  
Died; and Drake trampled down all tender  
thought,  
All human grief, and sought to find the cause,  
For his crew's sake, the ravenous unknown cause  
Of that fell scourge. There, in his own dark  
cabin,  
Lit by the wild light of the swinging lanthorn,

## D R A K E

---

He laid the naked body on that board  
Where they had supped together. He took the  
knife  
From the ague-stricken surgeon's palsied hands,  
And while the ship rocked in the eternal seas  
And dark waves lapped against the rolling hulk  
Making the silence terrible with voices,  
He opened his own brother's cold white corse,  
That pale deserted mansion of a soul,  
Bidding the surgeon mark, with his own eyes,  
While yet he had strength to use them, the foul  
spots,  
The swollen liver, the strange sodden heart,  
The yellow intestines. Yea, his dry lips hissed  
There in the stark face of Eternity  
“Seest thou? Seest thou? Knowest thou what it  
means?”  
Then, like a dream up-surged the belfried night  
Of Saint Bartholomew, the scented palaces  
Whence harlots leered out on the twisted streets  
Of Paris, choked with slaughter! Europe flamed  
With human torches, living altar candles,  
Lighted before the Cross where men had hanged

## BOOK IV

---

The Christ of little children. Cirque by cirque  
The world-wide hell reeled round him, East and  
West,

To where the tortured Indians worked the will  
Of lordly Spain in golden-famed Peru.

“God, is thy world a madman’s dream?” he  
groaned:

And suddenly, the clamour on the shore  
Sank, and that savage horde melted away  
Into the midnight forest as it came,  
Leaving no sign, save where the brushwood fire  
Still smouldered like a ruby in the gloom;  
And into the inmost caverns of his mind  
That other clamour sank, and there was peace.

“A madman’s dream,” he whispered, “Ay, to me  
A madman’s dream,” but better, better far  
Than that which bears upon its awful gates,  
Gates of a hell defined, unalterable,

*Abandon hope all ye who enter here!*

Here, here at least the dawn hath power to bring  
New light, new hope, new battles. Men may fight  
And sweep away that evil, if no more,  
At least from the small circle of their swords;

## D R A K E

---

Then die, content if they have struck one stroke  
For freedom, knowledge, brotherhood; one stroke  
To hasten that great kingdom God proclaims  
Each morning through the trumpets of the Dawn.

And far away, in Italy, that night  
Young Galileo, gazing upward, heard  
The self-same whisper from the abyss of stars  
Which lured the soul of Shakespeare as he lay  
Dreaming in May-sweet England, even now,  
And with its infinite music called once more  
The soul of Drake out to the unknown West.

Now like a wild rose in the fields of heaven  
Slipt forth the slender fingers of the Dawn  
And drew the great grey Eastern curtains back  
From the ivory saffroned couch. Rosily slid  
One shining foot and one warm rounded knee  
From silken coverlets of the tossed-back clouds.  
Then, like the meeting after desolate years,  
Face to remembered face, Drake saw the Dawn  
Step forth in naked splendour o'er the sea;  
Dawn, bearing still her rich divine increase

## BOOK IV

---

Of beauty, love, and wisdom round the world;  
The same, yet not the same. So strangely gleamed  
Her pearl and rose across the sapphire waves  
That scarce he knew the dead man at his feet.  
His world was made anew. Strangely his voice  
Rang through that solemn Eden of the morn  
Calling his men, and stranger than a dream  
Their boats black-blurred against the crimson  
East,  
Or flashing misty sheen where'er the light  
Smote on their smooth wet sides, like seraph ships  
Moved in a dewy glory towards the land;  
Their oars of glittering diamond broke the sea  
As by enchantment into burning jewels  
And scattered rainbows from their flaming blades.  
The clear green water lapping round their prows,  
The words of sharp command as now the keels  
Crunched on his lonely shore, and the following  
wave  
Leapt slapping o'er the sterns, in that new light  
Were more than any miracle. 'At last  
Drake, as they grouped a little way below  
The crumbling sandy cliff whereon he stood,

## D R A K E

---

Seeming to overshadow them as he loomed  
A cloud of black against the crimson sky,  
Spoke, as a man may hardly speak but once:  
“ My seamen, oh my friends, companions, kings;  
For I am least among you, being your captain;  
And ye are men, and all men born are kings,  
By right divine, and I the least of these,  
Because I must usurp the throne of God  
And sit in judgment, even till I have set  
My seal upon the red wax of this blood,  
This blood of my dead friend, ere it grow cold.  
Not all the waters of that mighty sea  
Could wash my hands of sin if I should now  
Falter upon my path. But look to it, you,  
Whose word was doom last night to this dead man;  
Look to it, I say, look to it! Brave men might  
shrink  
From this great voyage; but the heart of him  
Who dares turn backward now must be so hardy  
That God might make a thousand millstones of it  
To hang about the necks of those that hurt  
Some little child, and cast them in the sea.  
Yet if ye will be found so more than bold,

## BOOK IV

---

Speak now, and I will hear you: God will judge.  
But ye shall take four ships of these my five,  
Tear out the lions from their painted shields,  
And speed you homeward. Leave me but one ship,  
My *Golden Hynde*, and five good friends, nay one,  
To watch when I must sleep, and I will prove  
This judgment just against the winds of the world.  
Now ye that will return, speak: let me know you,  
Or be for ever silent; for I swear  
Over this butchered body, if any swerve  
Hereafter from the straight and perilous way,  
He shall not die alone. What? Will none speak?  
My comrades and my friends! Yet ye must learn,  
Mark me, my friends, I'd have you all to know  
That ye are kings. I'll have no jealousies  
Aboard my fleet. I'll have the gentleman  
To pull and haul wi' the seaman. I'll not have  
That canker of the Spaniards in my fleet.  
Ye that were captains, I cashier you all.  
I'll have no captains; I'll have nought but seamen,  
Obedient to my will, because I serve  
England. What, will ye murmur? Now, beware,  
Lest I should bid you homeward all alone,

## DRAKE

---

You whose white hands are found too delicate  
For aught but dallying with your jewelled swords!  
And thou, too, Master Fletcher, my ship's  
chaplain,

Mark me, I'll have no priestcraft. I have heard  
Overmuch talk of judgment from thy lips—  
God's judgment here, God's judgment there, upon  
us!

Whene'er the winds are contrary, thou takest  
Their powers upon thee for thy moment's end.  
Thou art God's minister, not God's oracle:  
Chain up thy tongue a little, or, by His wounds,  
If thou canst read this wide world like a book,  
Thou hast so little to fear, I'll set thee adrift  
On God's great sea to find thine own way home.  
Why, 'tis these very tyrannies o' the soul  
We strike at when we strike at Spain for England;  
And shall we here, in this great wilderness,  
Ungrappled and unchallenged, out of sight,  
Alone, without one struggle, sink that flag  
Which, when the cannon thundered, could but  
stream  
Triumphant over all the storms of death.

## BOOK IV

---

Nay, Master Wynter and my gallant captains,  
I see ye are tamed. Take up your ranks again  
In humbleness, remembering ye are kings,  
Kings for the sake and by the will of England,  
Therefore her servants till your lives' last end.  
Comrades, mistake not this, our little fleet  
Is freighted with the golden heart of England,  
'And, if we fail, that golden heart will break.  
The world's wide eyes are on us, and our souls  
Are woven together into one great flag  
Of England. Shall we strike it? Shall it be  
    rent

'Asunder with small discord, party strife,  
Ephemeral conflict of contemptible tongues,  
Or shall it be blazoned, blazoned evermore  
On the most heaven-wide page of history?  
This is that hour,—I know it in my soul,—  
When we must choose for England. Ye are kings,  
And sons of Vikings, exiled from your throne.  
Have ye forgotten? Nay, your blood remembers!  
There is your kingdom, Vikings, that great ocean  
Whose tang is in your nostrils. Ye must choose  
Whether to reassume it now for England,

## DRAKE

---

To claim its thunders for her panoply,  
To lay its lightnings in her sovereign hands,  
Win her the great commandment of the sea,  
And let its glory roll with her dominion  
Round the wide world for ever, sweeping back  
All evil deeds and dreams, or whether to yield  
For evermore that kinghood. Ye must learn  
Here in this golden dawn our great emprise  
Is greater than we knew. Eye hath not seen,  
Ear hath not heard, what came across the dark  
Last night, as there anointed with that blood  
I knelt and saw the wonder that should be.  
I saw new heavens of freedom, a new earth  
Released from all old tyrannies. I saw  
The brotherhood of man, for which we rode,  
Most ignorant of the splendour of our spears,  
Against the crimson dynasties of Spain.  
Mother of freedom, home and hope and love,  
Our little island, far, how far away,  
I saw thee shatter the whole world of hate,  
I saw the sunrise on thy helmet flame  
With new-born hope for all the world in thee!  
Come now, to sea, to sea!"

## BOOK IV

---

And ere they knew  
What power impelled them, with one mighty cry  
They lifted up their hearts to the new dawn  
And hastened down the shores and launched the  
    boats,  
And in the fierce white out-draught of the waves  
Thrust with their brandished oars and the boats  
    leapt  
Out, and they settled at the groaning thwarts,  
And the white water boiled before their blades,  
As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,  
His own boat led the way; and ere they knew  
What power as of a wind bore them along,  
Anchor was up, their hands were on the sheets,  
The sails were broken out, and that small  
    squadron  
Was flying like a sea-bird to the South.  
Now to the strait Magellanus they came,  
And entered in with ringing shouts of joy.  
Nor did they think there was a fairer strait  
In all the world than this which lay so calm  
Between great silent mountains crowned with  
    snow,

## DRAKE

---

Unutterably lonely. Marvellous  
The pomp of dawn and sunset on those heights,  
'And like a strange new sacrilege the advance  
Of prows that ploughed that time-forgotten tide.  
But soon rude flaws, cross-currents, tortuous  
channels  
Bewildered them, and many a league they drove  
As down some vaster Acheron, while the coasts  
With wailing voices cursed them all night long,  
And once again the hideous fires leapt red  
By many a grim wrenched crag and gaunt ravine.  
So for a hundred leagues of whirling spume  
They groped, till suddenly, far away, they saw  
Full of the sunset, like a cup of gold,  
The purple Westward portals of the strait.  
Onward o'er roughening waves they plunged and  
reached  
*Capo Desiderato*, where they saw  
What seemed stupendous in that lonely place,—  
Gaunt, black, and sharp as death against the sky  
The Cross, the great black Cross on Cape Desire,  
Which dead Magellan raised upon the height  
To guide, or so he thought, his wandering ships,

## BOOK IV

---

Not knowing they had left him to his doom,  
Not knowing how with tears, with tears of joy,  
Rapture, and terrible triumph, and deep awe,  
Another should come voyaging and read  
Unutterable glories in that sign;  
While his rough seamen raised their mighty shout,  
And, once again, before his wondering eyes,  
League upon league of awful burnished gold,  
Rolled the unknown immeasurable sea.

Now, in those days, as even Magellan held,  
Men thought that Southward of the strait there  
swept  
Firm land up to the white Antartick Pole,  
Which now not far they deemed. But when  
Drake passed  
From out the strait to take his Northward way  
Up the Pacific coast, a great head-wind  
Suddenly smote them; and the heaving seas  
Bulged all around them into billowy hills,  
Dark rolling mountains, whose majestic crests  
Like wild white flames far-blown and savagely  
flickering

## D R A K E

---

Swept through the clouds; and on their sullen  
slopes

Like wind-whipt withered leaves those little ships,  
Now hurtled to the Zenith and now plunged  
Down into bottomless gulfs, were suddenly  
scattered

And whirled away. Drake, on the *Golden Hynde*,  
One moment saw them near him, soaring up  
Above him on the huge o'erhanging billows  
As if to crash down on his poop; the next,  
A mile of howling sea had swept between  
Each of those wind-whipt straws, and they were  
gone

Through roaring deserts of embattled death,  
Where, like a hundred thousand chariots charged  
With lightnings and with thunders, one great wave  
Leading the unleashed ocean down the storm  
Hurled them away to Southward.

One last glimpse  
Drake caught o' the *Marygold*, when some mighty  
vortex

Wide as the circle of the wide sea-line

## BOOK IV

---

Swept them together again. He saw her  
                  staggering

With mast snapt short and wreckage-tangled deck  
Where men like insects clung. He saw the waves  
Leap over her mangled hulk, like wild white  
                  wolves,

Volleying out of the clouds down dismal steeps  
Of green-black water. Like a wounded steed  
Quivering upon its haunches, up she heaved  
Her head to throw them off. Then, in one mass  
Of fury crashed the great deep over her,  
Trampling her down, down into the nethermost  
                  pit,

As with a madman's wrath. She rose no more,  
And in the stream of the ocean's hurricane  
                  laughter

The *Golden Hynde* went hurtling to the South,  
With sails rent into ribbons and her mast  
Snapt like a twig. Yea, where Magellan thought  
Firm land had been, the little *Golden Hynde*  
Whirled like an autumn leaf through league on  
                  league

Of bursting seas, chaos on crashing chaos,

## D R A K E

---

A rolling wilderness of charging Alps  
That shook the world with their tremendous war;  
Grim beetling cliffs that grappled with clamorous  
gulfs,  
Valleys that yawned to swallow the wide heaven;  
Immense white-flowering fluctuant precipices,  
And hills that swooped down at the throat of hell;  
From Pole to Pole, one blanching bursting storm  
Of world-wide oceans, where the huge Pacific  
Roared greetings to the Atlantic, and both swept  
In broad white cataracts, league on struggling  
league,  
Pursuing and pursued, immeasurable,  
With Titan hands grasping the rent black sky  
East, West, North, South. Then, then was battle  
indeed  
Of midget men upon that wisp of grass  
The *Golden Hynde*, who, as her masts crashed,  
hung  
Clearing the tiny wreckage from small decks  
With ant-like weapons. Not their captain's voice  
Availed them now amidst the deafening thunder  
Of seas that felt the heavy hand of God,

## BOOK IV

---

Only they saw across the blinding spume  
In steely flashes, grand and grim, a face,  
Like the last glimmer of faith among mankind,  
Calm in this warring universe, where Drake  
Stood, lashed to his post, beside the helm. Black  
seas

Buffeted him. Half-stunned he dashed away  
The sharp brine from his eagle eyes and turned  
To watch some mountain-range come rushing  
down

As if to o'erwhelm them utterly. Once, indeed,  
Welkin and sea were one black wave, white-fanged,  
White-crested, and up-heaved so mightily  
That, though it coursed more swiftly than a herd  
Of Titan steeds upon some terrible plain  
Nigh the huge City of Ombos, yet it seemed  
Most strangely slow, with all those crumbling  
crests,

Each like a cataract on a mountain-side,  
And moved with the steady majesty of doom  
High over him. One moment's flash of fear,  
And yet not fear, but rather life's regret,  
Felt Drake, then laughed a low deep laugh of joy

## DRAKE

---

Such as men taste in battle; yea, 'twas good  
To grapple thus with death; one low deep laugh,  
One mutter as of a lion about to spring,  
Then burst that thunder o'er him. Height o'er  
height  
The heavens rolled down, and waves were all the  
world.

Meanwhile, in England, dreaming of her sailor,  
Far off, his heart's bride waited, of a proud  
And stubborn house the bright and gracious flower.  
Whom oft her father urged with scanty grace  
That Drake was dead and she had best forget  
The fellow, he grunted. For her father's heart  
Was fettered with small memories, mocked by all  
The greater world's traditions and the trace  
Of earth's low pedigree among the suns.  
Ringed with the terrible twilight of the Gods,  
Ringed with the blood-red dusk of dying nations,  
His faith was in his grandam's mighty skirt,  
And, in that awful consciousness of power,  
Had it not been that even in this he feared  
To sully her silken flounce or farthingale

## BOOK IV

---

Wi' the white dust on his hands, he would have  
chalked

To his own shame, thinking it shame, the word  
Nearest to God in its divine embrace  
Of agonies and glories, the dread word  
*Demos* across that door in Nazareth  
Whence came the prentice Carpenter whose voice  
Hath shaken kingdoms down, whose menial gibbet  
Rises triumphant o'er the wreck of Empires  
And stretches out its arms amongst the stars.

But she, his daughter, only let her heart  
Loveably forge a charter for her love,  
Cheat her false creed with faithful faery dreams  
That wrapt her love in mystery; thought,  
perchance,

He came of some unhappy noble race  
Ruined in battle for some lost high cause.  
And, in the general mixture of men's blood,  
Her dream was truer than his whose bloodless  
pride

Urged her to wed the chinless, moon-struck fool,  
Sprung from five hundred years of idiocy,  
Who now besought her hand; would force her bear

## D R A K E

---

Some heir to a calf's tongue and a coronet,  
Whose cherished taints of blood will please his  
friends  
With "Yea, Sir William's first-born hath the  
freak,  
The family freak, being embryonic. Yea,  
And with a fine half-wittedness, forsooth.  
Praise God, our children's children yet shall see  
The lord o' the manor muttering to himself  
At midnight by the gryphon-guarded gates,  
Or gnawing his nails in desolate corridors,  
Or pacing moonlit halls, dagger in hand,  
Waiting to stab his father's pitiless ghost."  
So she—the girl—sweet Bess of Sydenham,  
Most innocently proud, was prouder yet  
Than thus to let her heart stoop to the lure  
Of lordling lovers, though her unstained soul  
Slumbered amidst those dreams as in old tales  
The princess in the enchanted forest sleeps  
Till the prince wakes her with a kiss and draws  
The far-flung hues o' the gleaming magic web  
Into one heart of flame. And now, for Drake,  
She slept like Brynhild in a ring of fire

## BOOK IV

---

Which he must pass to win her. For the wrath  
Of Spain now flamed, awaiting his return,  
All round the seas of home; and even the Queen  
Elizabeth blenched, as that tremendous Power  
Menaced the heart of England, blenched and  
vowed

Drake's head to Spain's ambassadors, though still  
By subtlety she hoped to find some way  
Later to save or warn him ere he came.  
Perchance, too,—nay, most like,—he will be slain,  
Or even now lies dead, out in the West,  
She thought, and then the promise works no harm.  
But, day by day, there came as on the wings  
Of startled winds from o'er the Spanish Main,  
Strange echoes as of sacked and clamouring ports  
And battered gates of fabulous golden cities,  
A murmur out of the sunsets of Peru,  
A sea-bird's wail from Lima. While no less  
The wrathful menace gathered up its might  
All round our little isle; till now the King  
Philip of Spain half secretly decreed  
The building of huge docks from which to launch  
A Fleet Invincible that should sweep the seas

## D R A K E

---

Of all the world, throttle with one broad grasp  
'All Protestant rebellion, having stablished  
His red feet in the Netherlands, thence to hurl  
His whole World-Empire at this little isle,  
England, our mother, home and hope and love,  
And bend her neck beneath his yoke. For now  
No half surrender sought he. At his back,  
Robed with the scarlet of a thousand martyrs,  
Admonishing him, stood Rome, and, in her hand,  
Grasping the Cross of Christ by its great hilt,  
She pointed it, like a dagger, tow'rds the throat  
Of England.

One long year, two years had passed  
Since Drake set sail from grey old Plymouth  
Sound;

And in those woods of faery wonder still  
Slumbered his love in steadfast faith. But now  
With louder lungs her father urged—" He is dead:  
Forget him. There is one that loves you, seeks  
Your hand in marriage, and he is a goodly match  
E'en for my daughter. You shall wed him,  
Bess!"

## BOOK IV

---

But when the new-found lover came to woo,  
Glancing in summer silks and radiant hose,  
Whipt doublet and enormous pointed shoon,  
She played him like a fish and sent him home  
Spluttering with dismay, a stickleback  
Discoloured, a male minnow of dimpled streams  
With all his rainbows paling in the prime,  
To hide amongst his lilies, while once more  
She took her casement seat that overlooked  
The sea and read in Master Spenser's book,  
Which Francis gave "To my dear lady and queen  
Bess," that most rare processional of love—  
*"Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song!"*  
Yet did her father urge her day by day,  
And day by day her mother dinned her ears  
With petty saws, as—"When *I* was a girl,"  
And "I remember what *my* father said,"  
And "Love, oh feather-fancies plucked from  
geese  
You call your poets!" Yet she hardly meant  
To slight true love, save in her daughter's heart;  
For the old folk ever find it hard to see  
The passion of their children. When it wakes,

## DRAKE

---

The child becomes a stranger. That small bird  
Which was its heart hath left the fostering nest  
And flown they know not whither. So with Bess;  
But since her soul still slumbered, and the moons  
Rolled on and blurred her soul's particular love  
With the vague unknown impulse of her youth,  
Her brave resistance often melted now  
In tears, and her will weakened day by day;  
Till on a dreadful summer morn there came,  
Borne by a wintry flaw, home to the Thames,  
A bruised and battered ship, all that was left,  
So said her crew, of Drake's ill-fated fleet.  
John Wynter, her commander, told the tale  
Of how the *Golden Hynde* and *Marygold*  
Had by the wind Euroclydon been driven  
Sheer o'er the howling edges of the world;  
Of how himself by God's good providence  
Was hurled into the strait *Magellanus*;  
Of how on the horrible frontiers of the Void  
He had watched in vain, lit red with beacon-fires  
The desperate coasts o' the black abyss, whence  
none  
Ever returned, though many a week he watched

## BOOK IV

---

Beneath the Cross; and only saw God's wrath  
Burn through the heavens and devastate the  
mountains,  
'And hurl unheard of oceans roaring down  
'After the lost ships in one cataract  
Of thunder and splendour and fury and rolling  
doom.  
Then, with a bitter triumph in his face,  
As if this were the natural end of all  
Such vile plebeians, as if he had foreseen it  
As if himself had breathed a tactful hint  
Into the aristocratic ears of God,  
Her father broke the last frail barriers down,  
Broke the poor listless will o' the lonely girl,  
Who careless now of aught but misery  
Promised to wed their lordling. Mighty speed  
They made to press that loveless marriage on;  
And ere the May had mellowed into June  
Her marriage eve had come. Her cold hands  
held  
Drake's gift. She scarce could see her name, writ  
broad  
By that strong hand as it was, *To my Queen Bess.*

## DRAKE

---

She looked out through her casement o'er the sea,  
Listening its old enchanted moan, which seemed  
Striving to speak, she knew not what. Its breath  
Fluttered the roses round the grey old walls,  
And shook the starry jasmine. A great moon  
Hung like a red lamp in the sycamore.  
A corn-crake in the hay-fields far away  
Chirped like a cricket, and the night-jar churred  
His passionate love-song. Soft-winged moths  
besieged  
Her lantern. Under many a star-stabbed elm  
The nightingale began his golden song,  
Whose warm thick notes are each a drop of blood  
From that small throbbing breast against the thorn  
Pressed close to turn the white rose into red;  
Even as her lawn-clad may-white bosom pressed  
Quivering against the bars, while her dark hair  
Streamed round her shoulders and her small bare  
feet  
Gleamed in the dusk. Then spake she to her  
maid—  
“I cannot sleep, I cannot sleep to-night.  
Bring thy lute hither and sing. Say, dost thou  
think

## BOOK IV

---

The dead can watch us from their distant world?  
Can our dead friends be near us when we weep?  
I wish 'twere so! For then my love would come,  
No matter then how far, my love would come,  
And press a light kiss on these aching eyes  
And say, 'Grieve not, dear heart, for I know all,  
And I forgive thee.' Ah, then, I should sleep,  
Sleep, sleep and dream once more. Last night,  
last night,

I know not if it were that song of thine  
Which tells of some poor lover, crazed with pain,  
Who wanders to the grave-side of his love  
And knocks at that cold door until his love  
Opens it, and they two for some brief while  
Forget their doom in one another's arms  
Once more; for, oh, last night, I had a dream;  
My love came to me through the Gates of Death:  
I know not how he came. I only know  
His arms were round me, and, from far away,  
From far beyond the stars it seemed, his voice  
Breathed, in unutterable grief, farewells  
Of shuddering sweetness, clasped in one small  
word—

*Sweetheart, a joy untold, an untold pain,*

## DRAKE

---

Far, far away, although his breath beat warm  
Against my cheek and dried mine own poor tears.  
Ah, sing that song once more; for I have heard  
There are some songs, and this was one I am sure,  
Like the grey poppies of those dreaming fields  
Where poor dead lovers drift, and in their pain  
We lose our own. Give me that poppied sleep,  
And if—in dreams—I touch my true love's lips,  
Trust me I will not ask ever to wake  
Again." Whereat the maiden touched her lute  
And sang, low-toned, with pity in her eyes.

Then Bess bowed down her lovely head; her breast  
Heaved with short sobs and, sickening at the heart,  
She grasped the casement, moaning, " Love, Love,  
Love,  
Come quickly: come, before it is too late;  
Come quickly—oh, come quickly!"

Then her maid

Slipped a soft arm around her and gently drew  
The supple quivering body, shaken with sobs,  
And all that firm young sweetness, to her breast,  
And led her to her couch, and all night long

## BOOK IV

---

She watched beside her, till the marriage morn  
Blushed in the heartless East. Then swiftly flew  
The pitiless moments, till—as in a dream—  
And borne along by dreams, or like a lily  
Cut from its anchorage in the stream to glide  
Down the smooth bosom of an unknown world  
Through fields of unknown blossom, so moved  
Bess

Amongst her maids, as the procession passed  
Forth to the little church upon the cliffs,  
And, as in those days was the bridal mode,  
Her lustrous hair in billowing beauty streamed  
Dishevelled o'er her shoulders, while the sun  
Caressed her bent and glossy head, and shone  
Over the deep blue, white-flaked, wrinkled sea,  
On full-blown rosy-petalled sails that flashed  
Like flying blossoms fallen from her crown.

## BOOK V

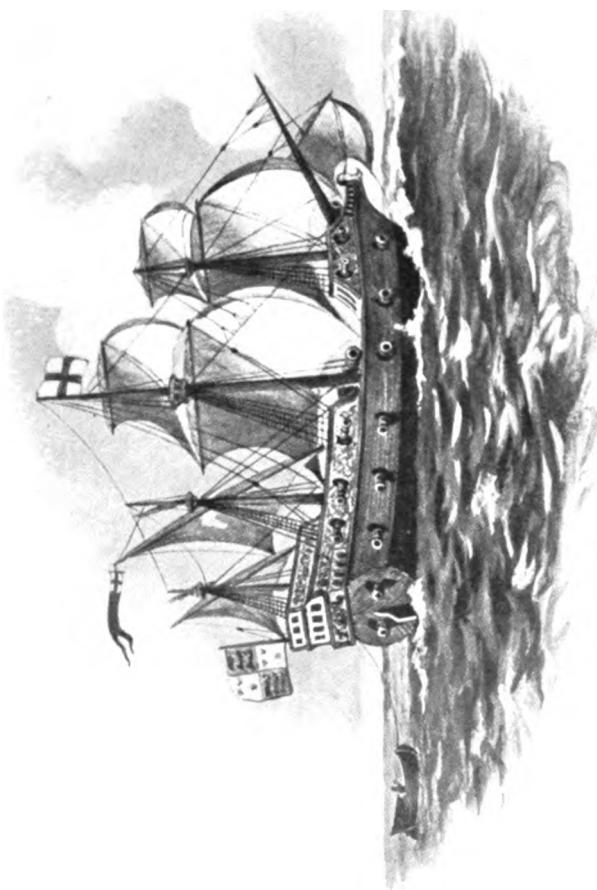
I

*With the fruit of Aladdin's garden clustering thick in  
her hold,  
With rubies awash in her scuppers and her bilge ablaze  
with gold,  
A world in arms behind her to sever her heart from  
home,  
The Golden Hind drove onward over the glittering  
foam.*

II

*If we go as we came, by the Southward, we meet wi'  
the fleets of Spain!  
'Tis a thousand to one against us: we'll turn to the West  
again!  
We have captured a China pilot, his charts and his  
golden keys:  
We'll sail to the golden Gateway, over the golden seas.*

**O**VER the immeasurable molten gold  
Wrapped in a golden haze, onward  
they drew;  
And now they saw the tiny purple quay  
Grow larger and darker and brighten into brown  
Across the swelling sparkle of the waves.



DRAKE'S SHIP, *The Golden Hind*

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## BOOK V

---

Brown on the quay, a train of tethered mules  
Munched at the nose-bags, while a Spaniard  
drowsed

On guard beside what seemed at first a heap  
Of fish, then slowly turned to silver bars  
Up-piled and glistening in the enchanted sun.  
Nor did that sentry wake as, like a dream,  
The *Golden Hynde* divided the soft sleep  
Of warm green lapping water, sidled up,  
Sank sail, and moored beside the quay. But  
Drake,

Lightly leaping ashore and stealing nigh,  
Picked up the Spaniard's long gay-ribboned gun  
Close to his ear. At once, without a sound,  
The watchman opened his dark eyes and stared  
As at strange men who suddenly had come,  
Borne by some magic carpet, from the stars;  
Then, with a courtly bow, his right hand thrust  
Within the lace embroideries of his breast.

Politely Drake, with pained apologies  
For this disturbance of a cavalier  
Napping on guard, straightway resolved to make  
Complete amends, by now relieving him

## DRAKE

---

Of these—which doubtless troubled his repose—  
These anxious bars of silver. With that word  
Two seamen leaped ashore and, gathering up  
The bars in a stout old patch of tawny sail,  
Slung them aboard. No sooner this was done  
Than out o' the valley, like a foolish jest  
Out of the mouth of some great John-a-dreams,  
In soft procession of buffoonery  
A woolly train of llamas proudly came  
Stepping by two and two along the quay,  
Laden with pack on pack of silver bars  
And driven by a Spaniard. His amaze  
The seamen greeted with profuser thanks  
For his most punctual thought and opportune  
Courtesy. None the less they must avouch  
It pained them much to see a cavalier  
Turned carrier; and, at once, they must insist  
On easing him of that too sordid care.

•      •      •      •      •

Then out from Tarapaca once again  
They sailed, their hold a glimmering mine of  
wealth,  
Towards Arica and Lima, where they deemed

## BOOK V

---

The prize of prizes waited unaware.  
For every year a gorgeous galleon sailed  
With all the harvest of Potosi's mines  
And precious stones from dead kings' diadems,  
Aztecs' and Incas' gem-encrusted crowns,  
Pearls from the glimmering Temples of the  
Moon,  
Rich opals with their milky rainbow-clouds,  
White diamonds from the Temples of the Sun,  
Carbuncles flaming scarlet, amethysts,  
Rubies, and sapphires; these to Spain she brought  
To glut her priestly coffers. Now not far  
Ahead they deemed she lay upon that coast,  
Crammed with the lustrous Indies, wrung with  
threat  
And torture from the naked Indian slaves.  
To him that spied her topsails first a prize  
Drake offered of the wondrous chain he wore;  
And every seaman, every ship-boy, watched  
Not only for the prize, but for their friends,  
If haply these had weathered through the storm.  
Nor did they know their friends had homeward  
turned,

## DRAKE

---

Bearing to England and to England's Queen,  
And his heart's queen, the tale that Drake was  
dead.

Northward they cruised along a warm wild coast  
That like a most luxurious goddess drowsed  
Supine to heaven, her arms behind her head,  
One knee up-thrust to make a mountain-peak,  
Her rosy breast up-heaving their soft snow  
In distant Andes, and her naked side  
With one rich curve for half a hundred leagues  
Bathed by the creaming foam; her heavy hair  
Fraught with the perfume of a thousand forests  
Tossed round about her beauty; and her mouth  
A scarlet mystery of distant flower  
Up-turned to take the kisses of the sun.  
But like a troop of boys let loose from school  
The adventurers went by, startling the stillness  
Of that voluptuous dream-encumbered shore  
With echoing shouts of laughter and alien song.

But as they came to Arica, from afar  
They heard the clash of bells upon the breeze,

## BOOK V

---

And knew that Rumour with her thousand wings  
Had rushed before them. Horsemen in the night  
Had galloped through the white coast-villages  
And spread the dreadful cry "El Draque!"  
abroad;

And when the gay adventurers drew nigh  
They found the quays deserted, and the ships  
All flown, except one little fishing-boat,  
Wherein an old man like a tortoise moved  
A wrinkled head above the rusty net  
His crawling hands repaired. He seemed to dwell  
Outside the world of war and peace, outside  
Everything save his daily task, and cared  
No whit who else might win or lose; for all  
The pilot asked of him without demur  
He answered, scarcely looking from his work.  
A galleon laden with eight hundred bars  
Of silver, not three hours ago had flown  
Northward, he muttered. Ere the words were  
out,  
The will of Drake thrilled through the *Golden  
Hynde*  
Like one sharp trumpet-call, and ere they knew

## DRAKE

---

What power impelled them, crowding on all sail  
Northward they surged, and roaring down the  
wind

At Chiuli, port of Arequipa, saw  
The chase at anchor. Wondering they came  
With all the gunners waiting at their guns  
Bare-armed and silent—nearer, nearer yet,—  
Close to the enemy. But no sight or sound  
Of living creature stirred upon her decks.  
Only a great grey cat lay in the sun  
Upon a warm smooth cannon-butt. A chill  
Ran through the veins of even the boldest there  
At that too peaceful silence. Cautiously  
Drake neared her in his pinnace; cautiously,  
Cutlass in hand, up that mysterious hull  
He climb'd, and wondered, as he climbed, to breathe  
The friendly smell o' the pitch and hear the waves  
With their incessant old familiar sound  
Crackling and slapping against her windward  
flank.

A ship of dreams was that; for when they reached  
The silent deck, they saw no crouching forms,  
They heard no sound of life. Only the hot  
Creak of the cordage whispered in the sun.

## BOOK V

---

The cat stood up and yawned, and slunk away  
Slowly, with furtive glances. The great hold  
Was empty, and the rich cabin stripped and bare.  
Suddenly one of the seamen with a cry  
Pointed where, close inshore, a little boat  
Stole towards the town; and, with a louder cry,  
Drake bade his men aboard the *Golden Hynde*.  
Scarce had they pulled two hundred yards away  
When, with a roar that seemed to buffet the  
heavens  
And rip the heart of the sea out, one red flame  
Blackened with fragments, the great galleon burst  
Asunder! All the startled waves were strewn  
With wreckage; and Drake laughed—"My lads,  
we have diced  
With death to-day, and won! My merry lads,  
It seems that Spain is bolting with the stakes!  
Now, if I have to stretch the skies for sails  
And summon the blasts of God up from the  
South  
To fill my canvas, I will overhaul  
Those dusky devils with the treasure-ship  
That holds our hard-earned booty. Pull hard all,  
Hard for the *Golden Hynde*."

## DRAKE

---

And so they came  
At dead of night on Callao de Lima!  
They saw the harbour lights across the waves  
Glittering, and the shadowy hulks of ships  
Gathered together like a flock of sheep  
Within the port. With shouts and clink of chains  
A shadowy ship was entering from the North,  
And like the shadow of that shadow slipped  
The *Golden Hynde* beside her thro' the gloom;  
And side by side they anchored in the port  
Amidst the shipping! Over the dark tide  
A small boat from the customs-house drew near.  
A sleepy, yawning, gold-laced officer  
Boarded the *Golden Hynde*, and with a cry,  
Stumbling against a cannon-butt, he saw  
The bare-armed British seamen in the gloom  
All waiting by their guns. Wildly he plunged  
Over the side and urged his boat away,  
Crying, "El Draque! El Draque!" At that  
dread word  
The darkness filled with clamour, and the ships,  
Cutting their cables, drifted here and there  
In mad attempts to seek the open sea.

## BOOK V

---

Wild lights burnt hither and thither, and all the  
port,

One furnace of confusion, heaved and seethed  
In terror; for each shadow of the night,  
Nay, the great night itself, was all *El Draque*.  
The Dragon's wings were spread from quay to  
quay,

The very lights that burnt from mast to mast  
And flared across the tide kindled his breath  
To fire; while here and there a British pinnace  
Slipped softly thro' the roaring gloom and glare,  
Ransacking ship by ship; for each one thought  
A fleet had come upon them. Each gave up  
The struggle as each was boarded; while,  
elsewhere,

Cannon to cannon, friends bombarded friends.

Yet not one ounce of treasure in Callao  
They found; for, fourteen days before they came,  
That greatest treasure-ship of Spain, with all  
The gorgeous harvest of that year, had sailed  
For Panama: her ballast—silver bars;  
Her cargo—rubies, emeralds, and gold.

## D R A K E

---

Out through the clamour and the darkness, out,  
Out to the harbour mouth, the *Golden Hynde*,  
Steered by the iron soul of Drake, returned:  
And where the way was blocked, her cannon clove  
A crimson highway to the midnight sea.  
Then Northward, Northward, o'er the jewelled  
main,  
Under the white moon like a storm they drove  
In quest of the *Cacafuego*. Fourteen days  
Her start was; and at dawn the fair wind sank,  
And chafing lay the *Golden Hynde*, becalmed;  
While, on the hills, the Viceroy of Peru  
Marched down from Lima with two thousand  
men,  
And sent out four huge ships of war to sink  
Or capture the fierce Dragon. Loud laughed  
Drake  
To see them creeping nigh, urged with great oars,  
Then suddenly pause; for none would be the first  
To close with him. And, ere they had steeled  
their hearts  
To battle, a fair breeze broke out anew,  
And Northward sped the little *Golden Hynde*

## BOOK V

---

In quest of the lordliest treasure-ship of Spain.

Behind her lay a world in arms; for now  
Wrath and confusion clamoured for revenge  
From sea to sea. Spain claimed the pirate's head  
From England, and awaited his return  
With all her tortures. And where'er he passed  
He sowed the dragon's teeth, and everywhere  
Cadmean broods of arméd men arose  
And followed, followed on his fiery trail.  
Men toiled at Lima to fit out a fleet  
Grim enough to destroy him. All night long  
The flare went up from cities on the coast  
Where men like naked devils toiled to cast  
Cannon that might have overwhelmed the powers  
Of Michael when he drove that hideous rout  
Through livid chaos to the black abyss.  
Small hope indeed there seemed of safe return;  
But Northward sped the little *Golden Hynde*,  
The world-watched midget ship of eighteen guns,  
Undaunted; and upon the second dawn  
Sighted a galleon, not indeed the chase,  
Yet worth a pause; for out of her they took—

## D R A K E

---

Embossed with emeralds large as pigeon's eggs—  
A golden crucifix, with eighty pounds  
In weight of gold. The rest they left behind;  
And onward, onward, to the North they flew—  
A score of golden miles, a score of green,  
An hundred miles, eight hundred miles of foam,  
Rainbows and fire, ransacking as they went  
Ship after ship for news o' the chase and gold;  
Learning from every capture that they drew  
Nearer and nearer. At Truxillo, dim  
And dreaming city, a-drowse with purple flowers,  
She had paused, ay, paused to take a freight of  
gold!

'At Paita—she had passed two days in front,  
Only two days, two days ahead; nay, one!  
'At Quito, close inshore, a youthful page,  
Bright-eyed, ran up the rigging and cried, "A  
sail!"

'A sail! The *Cacafuego!* And the chain  
Is mine!" And by the strange cut of her sails,  
Whereof they had been told in Callao,  
They knew her!

Heavily laden with her gems,  
Lazily drifting with her golden fruitage,

## BOOK V

---

Over the magic seas they saw her hull  
Loom as they onward drew; but Drake, for fear  
The prey might take alarm and run ashore,  
Tailed wine-skins, filled with water, o'er the side  
To hold his ship back, till the darkness fell,  
And with the night the off-shore wind arose.  
At last the sun sank down, the rosy light  
Faded from Andes' peaked and bosomed snow:  
The night-wind rose: the wine-skins were  
uphauled;  
And, like a hound unleashed, the *Golden Hynde*  
Leapt forward thro' the gloom.

A cable's length

Divided them. The *Cacafuego* heard  
A rough voice in the darkness bidding her  
*Heave to!* She held her course. Drake gave the  
word.  
A broadside shattered the night, and over her side  
Her main-yard clattered like a broken wing!  
On to her decks the British sea-dogs swarmed,  
Cutlass in hand: that fight was at an end.

The ship was cleared, a prize crew placed on  
board,

## DRAKE

---

Then both ships turned their heads to the open sea.

At dawn, being out of sight of land, they 'gan  
Examine the great prize. None ever knew  
Save Drake and Gloriana what wild wealth  
They had captured there. Thus much at least  
was known:

'An hundredweight of gold, and twenty tons  
Of silver bullion; thirteen chests of coins;  
Nuggets of gold unnumbered; countless pearls,  
Diamonds, and emeralds; but the worth of these  
Was past all reckoning. In the crimson dawn,  
Ringed with the lonely pomp of sea and sky,  
The naked-footed seamen bathed knee-deep  
In gold and gathered up Aladdin's fruit—  
'All-coloured gems—and tossed them in the sun.  
The hold like one great elfin orchard gleamed  
With dusky globes and tawny glories piled,  
Hesperian apples, heap on mellow heap,  
Rich with the hues of sunset, rich and ripe  
And ready for the enchanted cider-press;  
'An Emperor's ransom in each burning orb;  
'A kingdom's purchase in each clustered bough;  
'The freedom of all slaves in every chain.

## BOOK VI

**N**OW like the soul of Ophir on the sea  
Glittered the *Golden Hynde*, and all  
her heart  
Turned home to England. As a child  
that finds

A ruby ring upon the highway, straight  
Homeward desires to run with it, so she  
Yearned for her home and country. Yet the  
world

Was all in arms behind her. Fleet on fleet  
Awaited her return. Along the coast  
The very churches melted down their chimes  
And cast them into cannon. To the South  
A thousand cannon watched Magellan's straits,  
And fleets were scouring all the sea like hounds,  
With orders that where'er they came on Drake,  
Although he were the Dragon of their dreams,  
They should out-blast his thunders and convey,  
Dead or alive, his body back to Spain.

And Drake laughed out and said, "My trusty lads

## D R A K E

---

Of Devon, you have made the wide world ring  
With England's name; you have swept one half  
the seas  
From sky to sky; and in our oaken hold  
You have packed the gorgeous Indies. We shall  
sail  
But slowly with such wealth. If we return,  
We are one against ten thousand! We will seek  
The fabled Northern passage, take our gold  
Safe home; then out to sea again and try  
Our guns against their guns."

. . . . .

And as they sailed  
Northward, they swooped on warm blue Guatulco  
For food and water. Nigh the dreaming port  
The grand alcaldes in high conclave sat,  
Blazing with gold and scarlet, as they tried  
A batch of negro slaves upon the charge  
Of idleness in Spanish mines; dumb slaves,  
With bare scarred backs and labour-broken knees,  
And sorrowful eyes like those of wearied kine  
Spent from the ploughing. Even as the judge  
Rose to condemn them to the knotted lash

## BOOK VI

---

The British boat's crew, quiet and compact,  
Entered the court. The grim judicial glare  
Grew wider with amazement, and the judge  
Staggered against his gilded throne.

“I thank  
Almighty God,” cried Drake, “who hath given  
me this—

That I who once, in ignorance, procured  
Slaves for the golden bawdy-house of Spain,  
May now, in England’s name, help to requite  
That wrong. For now I say in England’s name,  
Where’er her standard flies, the slave shall stand  
Upright, the shackles fall from off his limbs.  
Unyoke the prisoners: tell them they are men  
Once more, not beasts of burden. Set them free;  
But take these gold and scarlet popinjays  
Aboard my *Golden Hynde*; and let them write  
An order that their town shall now provide  
My boats with food and water.”

This being done,  
The slaves being placed in safety on the prize,  
The *Golden Hynde* revictualled and the casks  
Replenished with fresh water, Drake set free

## D R A K E

---

The judges and swept Northward once again;  
And, off the coast of Nicaragua, found  
'A sudden treasure better than all gold;  
For on the track of the China trade they caught  
A ship whereon two China pilots sailed,  
'And in their cabin lay the secret charts,  
Red hieroglyphs of Empire, unknown charts  
Of silken sea-roads down the golden West  
Where all roads meet and East and West are one.  
And, with that mystery stirring in their hearts  
Like a strange cry from home, Northward they  
swept  
And Northward, till the soft luxurious coasts  
Hardened, the winds grew bleak, the great green  
waves  
Loomed high like mountains round them, and the  
spray  
Froze on their spars and yards. Fresh from the  
warmth  
Of tropic seas the men could hardly brook  
That cold; and when the floating hills of ice  
Like huge green shadows crowned with ghostly  
snow.

## BOOK VI

---

Went past them with strange whispers in the  
gloom,  
Or took mysterious colours in the dawn,  
Their hearts misgave them; and they found no  
way;  
But all was iron shore and icy sea.  
And one by one the crew fell sick to death  
In that fierce winter, and the land still ran  
Westward and showed no passage. Tossed with  
storms,  
Onward they plunged, or furrowed gentler tides  
Of ice-lit emerald that made the prow  
A faery beak of some enchanted ship  
Flinging wild rainbows round her as she drove  
Thro' seas unsailed by mortal mariners,  
Past isles unhailed of any human voice,  
Where sound and silence mingled in one song  
Of utter solitude. Ever as they went  
The flag of England blazoned the broad breeze,  
Northward, where never ship had sailed before,  
Northward, till lost in helpless wonderment,  
Dazed as a soul awakening from the dream  
Of death to some wild dawn in Paradise

## DRAKE

---

(Yet burnt with cold as they whose very tears  
Freeze on their faces where Cocytus wails)  
All world-worn, bruised, wing-broken, wracked,  
and wrenched,  
Blackened with lightning, scarred as with evil  
deeds,  
But all embalmed in beauty by that sun  
Which never sets, bosomed in peace at last  
The *Golden Hynde* rocked on a glittering calm.  
Seas that no ship had ever sailed, from sky  
To glistening sky, swept round them. Glory and  
gleam,  
Glamour and lucid rapture and diamond air  
Embraced her broken spars, begrimed with gold  
Her gloomy hull, rocking upon a sphere  
New made, it seemed, mysterious with the first  
Mystery of the world, where holy sky  
And sacred sea shone like the primal Light  
Of God, a-stir with whispering sea-bird's wings  
And glorious with clouds. Only, all day,  
All night, the rhythmic utterance of His Will  
In the deep sigh of seas, that washed His throne,  
Rose and relapsed across Eternity,

## BOOK VI

---

Timed to the pulse of æons. All their world  
Seemed strange as unto us the great new heavens  
And glittering shores, if on some airy bark  
To Saturn's coasts we came and traced no more  
The tiny gleam of our familiar earth  
Far off, but heard tremendous oceans roll  
Round unimagined continents, and saw  
Terrible mountains unto which our Alps  
Were less than mole-hills, and such gaunt ravines  
Cleaving them and such cataracts roaring down  
As burst the gates of our earth-moulded senses  
Pour the eternal glory on our souls,  
And, while ten thousand chariots bring the dawn,  
Hurl us poor midgets trembling to our knees.  
Glory and glamour and rapture of lucid air  
Ice cold, with subtle colours of the sky  
Embraced her broken spars, belted her hulk  
With brilliance, while she dipped her jacinth beak  
In waves of mounded splendour, and sometimes  
A great ice-mountain flashed and floated by  
Throned on the waters, pinnacled and crowned  
With all the smouldering jewels in the world;  
Or in the darkness, glimmering berg on berg,

## D R A K E

---

All emerald to the moon, went by like ghosts  
Whispering to the South.

There, as they lay,  
Waiting a wind to fill the stiffened sails,  
Their hearts remembered that in England now  
The Spring was nigh, and in that lonely sea  
The skilled musicians filled their eyes with home.

### SONG

#### I

*It is the Spring-tide now!  
Under the hawthorn bough  
The milkmaid goes:  
Her eyes are violets blue  
Washed with the morning dew,  
Her mouth a rose.  
It is the Spring-tide now.*

#### II

*The lanes are growing sweet,  
The lambkins brisk and bleat  
In all the meadows:  
The glossy dappled kine*

## BOOK VI

---

*Blink in the warm sunshine,  
Cooling their shadows.  
It is the Spring-tide now.*

### III

*Soon hand in sunburnt hand  
Thro' God's green fairyland,  
England, our home,  
Whispering as they stray  
Adown the primrose way,  
Lovers will roam.  
It is the Spring-tide now.*

And then, with many a chain of linkéd sweetness,  
Harmonious gold, they drew their hearts and souls  
Back, back to England, thoughts of wife and child,  
Mother and sweetheart and the old companions,  
The twisted streets of London and the deep  
Delight of Devon lanes, all softly voiced  
In words or cadences, made them breathe hard  
'And gaze across the everlasting sea,  
Craving for that small isle so far away.

## DRAKE

---

### SONG

#### I

*O you beautiful land,* A  
*Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright* N  
*With the flowery largesse of May* E  
*Sweet from the palm of her hand* A  
*Out-flung, till the hedges grew white* N  
*As the green-arched billows with spray.* E

#### II

White from the fall of her feet  
The daisies awake in the sun!  
Cliff-side and valley and plain  
With the breath of the thyme growing sweet  
Laugh, for the Spring is begun;  
And Love hath turned homeward again.  
*O you beautiful land!* &c.

#### III

Where should the home be of Love,  
But there, where the hawthorn-tree blows,  
And the milkmaid trips out with her pail,

## BOOK VI

---

And the skylark in heaven above  
Sings, till the West is a rose  
And the East is a nightingale?  
*O you beautiful land! &c.*

### IV.

There where the sycamore trees  
Are shading the satin-skinned kine,  
And oaks, whose brethren of old  
Conquered the strength of the seas,  
Grow broad in the sunlight and shine  
Crowned with their cressets of gold;  
*O you beautiful land! &c.*

### V

Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright  
With rose-coloured cloudlets above;  
Billowing broad and grand  
Where the meadows with blossom are white  
For the foot-fall, the foot-fall of Love.  
*O you beautiful land!*

### VI

How should we sing of thy beauty,  
England, mother of men,

## DRAKE

---

We that can look in thine eyes  
And see there the splendour of duty  
Deep as the depth of their ken,  
Wide as the ring of thy skies.

### VII

*O you beautiful land,*  
*Deep-bosomed with beeches and bright*  
*With the flowery largesse of May*  
*Sweet from the palm of her hand*  
*Out-flung, till the hedges grew white*  
*As the green-arched billows with spray.*  
*O you beautiful land!*

And when a fair wind rose again, there seemed  
No hope of passage by that fabled way  
Northward, and suddenly Drake put down his  
helm  
And, with some wondrous purpose in his eyes,  
Turned Southward once again, until he found  
A lonely natural harbour on the coast  
Near San Francisco, where the cliffs were white  
Like those of England, and the soft soil teemed

## BOOK VI

---

With gold. There they careened the *Golden  
Hynde*—

Her keel being thick with barnacles and weeds—  
And built a fort and dockyard to refit  
Their little wandering home, not half so large  
As many a coasting barque to-day that scarce  
Would cross the Channel, yet she had swept the  
seas

Of half the world, and even now prepared  
For new adventures greater than them all.  
And as the sound of chisel and hammer broke  
The stillness of that shore, shy figures came,  
Keen-faced and grave-eyed Indians, from the  
woods  
To bow before the strange white-faced newcomers  
As gods. Whereat the chaplain much aghast  
Persuaded them with signs and broken words  
And grunts that even Drake was but a man,  
Whom none the less the savages would crown  
With woven flowers and barbarous ritual  
King of New Albion—so the seamen called  
That land, remembering the white cliffs of home.  
Much they implored, with many a sign and cry,

## D R A K E

---

Which by the rescued slaves upon the prize  
Were part interpreted, that Drake would stay  
And rule them; and the vision of the great  
Empire of Englishmen arose and flashed  
A moment round them, on that lonely shore.  
A small and weather-beaten band they stood,  
Bronzed seamen by the laughing rescued slaves,  
Ringed with gigantic loneliness and saw  
An Empire that should liberate the world;  
A power before the lightning of whose arms  
Darkness should die and all oppression cease;  
A Federation of the strong and weak,  
Whereby the weak were strengthened and the  
strong  
Made stronger in the increasing good of all;  
A gathering up of one another's loads;  
A turning of the wasteful rage of war  
To accomplish large and fruitful tasks of peace,  
Even as the strength of some great stream is turned  
To grind the corn for bread. E'en thus on  
England  
That splendour dawned which these in dreams  
foresaw

## BOOK VI

---

And saw not with their living eyes, but thou,  
England, mayst lift up eyes at last and see,  
Who, like that angel of the Apocalypse,  
Hast set one foot upon thy sea-girt isle,  
The other upon the waters, and canst raise  
Now, if thou wilt, above the assembled nations,  
The trumpet of deliverance to thy lips.

•      •      •      •      •

At last their task was done, the *Golden Hynde*  
Undocked, her white wings hoisted; and away  
Westward they swiftly glided from that shore  
Where, with a wild lament, their Indian friends,  
Knee-deep i' the creaming foam, all stood at gaze,  
Like men that for one moment in their lives  
Have seen a mighty drama cross their path  
And played upon the stage of vast events  
Knowing, henceforward, all their life is nought.  
But Westward sped the little *Golden Hynde*  
Across the uncharted ocean, with no guide  
But that great homing cry of all their hearts.  
Far out of sight of land they steered, straight out  
Across the great Pacific, in those days  
When even the compass proved no trusty guide,

## DRAKE

---

Straight out they struck in that small bark, straight  
out

Week after week, without one glimpse of aught  
But heaving seas, across the uncharted waste  
Straight to the sunset. Laughingly they sailed,  
With all that gorgeous booty in their holds,  
A splendour dragging deep through seas of doom,  
A prey to the first great hurricane that blew  
Except their God averted it. And still  
Their skilled musicians cheered the way along  
To shores beyond the sunset and the sea.  
And oft at nights, the yellow fo'c'sle lanthorn  
Swung over swarthy singing faces grouped  
Within the four small wooden walls that made  
Their home and shut them from the unfathomable  
Depths of mysterious gloom without that rolled  
All round them; or Tom Moone would heartily  
troll

A simple stave that struggled oft with thoughts  
Beyond its reach, yet reached their hearts no less.

## BOOK VI

---

### SONG

#### I

*Good luck befall you, mariners all  
That sail this world so wide!  
Whither we go, not yet we know:  
We steer by wind and tide.  
Be it right or wrong, I sing this song;  
For now it seems to me  
Men steer their souls thro' rocks and shoals  
As mariners use by sea.*

Chorus: *As mariners use by sea,  
My lads,  
As mariners use by sea!*

#### II

*And now they plough to windward, now  
They drive before the gale!  
Now are they hurled across the world  
With torn and tattered sail;  
Yet, as they will, they steer and still  
Defy the world's rude glee:  
Till death o'erwhelm them, mast and helm,  
They ride and rule the sea.*

## DRAKE

---

Chorus: *They ride and rule the sea  
My lads,  
They ride and rule the sea!*

Meantime, in England, Bess of Sydenham,  
Drake's love and queen, being told that Drake was  
dead,  
And numbed with grief, obeying her father's will  
That dreadful summer morn in bridal robes  
Had passed to wed her father's choice. The sun  
Streamed smiling on her as she went, half-dazed,  
Amidst her smiling maids. Nigh to the sea  
The church was, and the mellow marriage bells  
Mixed with its music. Far away, white sails  
Spangled the sapphire, white as flying blossoms  
New-fallen from her crown; but as the glad  
And sad procession neared the little church,  
From some strange ship-of-war, far out at sea,  
There came a sudden tiny puff of smoke—  
And then a dull strange throb, a whistling hiss,  
And scarce a score of yards away a shot  
Ploughed up the turf. None knew, none ever  
knew

## BOOK VI

---

From whence it came, whether a perilous jest  
Of English seamen, or a wanton deed  
Of Spaniards, or mere accident; but all  
Her maids in flight were scattered. Bess awoke  
As from a dream, crying aloud—" 'Tis he,  
'Tis he that sends this message. He is not dead.  
I will not pass the porch. Nay, take me home,  
'Twas he that sent that message."

Nought availed,  
Her father's wrath, her mother's tears, her maids'  
Cunning persuasions, nought; home she returned,  
And waited for the dead to come to life;  
Nor waited long; for ere that month was out,  
Rumour on rumour reached the coasts of England,  
Borne as it seemed on sea-birds' wings, that Drake  
Was on his homeward way.

## BOOK VII

THE imperial wrath of Spain, one world-wide sea  
Of furious pomp and flouted power,  
now surged  
'All round this little isle, with one harsh roar  
Deepening for Drake's return—"The *Golden  
Hynde*  
Ye swore had founded, Drake ye swore was  
drowned;  
They are on their homeward way! The head of  
Drake!  
What answer, what account, what recompense  
Now can ye yield our might invincible  
Except the head of Drake, whose bloody deeds  
Have reddened the Pacific, who hath sacked  
Cities of gold, burnt fleets, and ruined realms,—  
What answer but his life?"

To which the Queen  
Who saw the storm of Europe slowly rising

## BOOK VII

---

In awful menace o'er her wave-beat throne,  
And midmost of the storm, the ensanguined robes  
Of Rome and murderous hand, grasping the Cross  
By its great hilt, pointing it like a brand  
Blood-blackened at the throat of England, saw  
Like skeleton castles wrapt in rolling mist  
The monstrous engines and designs of war,  
The secret fleets and brooding panoplies  
Philip prepared, growing from day to day  
In dusk armipotent and embattled gloom  
Surrounding her, replied: "The life of Drake,  
If, on our strict inquiry, in due order  
We find that Drake have hurt our friends, mark  
well,  
If Drake have hurt our friends, the life of Drake."

. . . . .

And while the world awaited him, as men  
Might wait an earthquake, quietly one grey morn,  
One grey October morn of mist and rain  
When all the window-panes in Plymouth dripped  
With listless drizzle, and only through her streets  
Rumbled the death-cart with its dreary bell  
Monotonously plangent (for the plague

## DRAKE

---

Had lately like a vampire sucked the veins  
Of Plymouth town), a little weed-clogged ship,  
Grey as a ghost, glided into the Sound  
And anchored, scarce a soul to see her come,  
And not an eye to read the faded scroll  
Around her battered prow—the *Golden Hynde*.  
Then, thro' the dumb grey misty listless port,  
A rumour like the colours of the dawn  
Streamed o'er the shining quays, up the wet streets,  
In at the tavern doors, flashed from the panes  
And turned them into diamonds, fired the pools  
In every muddy lane with Spanish gold,  
Flushed in a thousand faces, Drake is come!  
Down every crowding alley the urchins leaped  
Tossing their caps, the *Golden Hynde* is come!  
Fishermen, citizen, prentice, dame and maid,  
Fat justice, floury baker, bloated butcher,  
Fishwife, minister and apothecary,  
Yea, even the driver of the death-cart, leaving  
His ghastly load, using his dreary bell  
To merrier purpose, down the seething streets,  
Panting, tumbling, jostling, helter-skelter  
To the water-side, to the water-side they rushed,

## BOOK VII

---

And some knee-deep beyond it, all one wild  
Welcome to Francis Drake!  
Wild kerchiefs fluttering, thunderous hurrahs  
Rolling from quay to quay, a thousand arms  
Outstretched to that grey ghostly little ship  
At whose masthead the British flag still flew;  
Then, over all, in one tumultuous tide  
Of pealing joy, the Plymouth bells outclashed  
A nation's welcome home to Francis Drake.

The very *Golden Hynde*, no idle dream,  
The little ship that swept the Spanish Main,  
Carelessly lying there, in Plymouth Sound,  
The *Golden Hynde*, the wonder of the world,  
A glory wrapt her greyness, and no boat  
Dared yet approach, save one, with Drake's close  
friends,  
Who came to warn him: "England stands alone  
'And Drake is made the price of England's peace.  
The Queen, perforce, must temporise with Spain,  
The Invincible! She hath forfeited thy life  
To Spain against her will. Only by this  
Rejection of thee as a privateer

## DRAKE

---

She averted instant war; for now the menace  
Of Spain draws nigher, looms darker every hour.  
The world is made Spain's footstool. Philip, the  
King,

E'en now hath added to her boundless power  
Without a blow, the vast domains and wealth  
Of Portugal, and deadlier yet, a coast  
That crouches over against us. Cadiz holds  
A huge Armada, none knows where to strike;  
And even this day a flying horseman brought  
Rumours that Spain hath landed a great force  
In Ireland. Mary of Scotland only waits  
The word to stab us in the side for Rome.  
The Queen, weighed down by Burleigh and the  
friends  
Of peace at any cost, may yet be driven  
To make thy life our ransom, which indeed  
She hath already sworn, or seemed to swear."

To whom Drake answered, "Gloriana lives;  
And in her life mine only fear lies dead,  
Mine only fear, for England, not myself.  
Willing am I and glad, as I have lived,

## BOOK VII

---

To die for England's sake.  
Yet, lest the Queen be driven now to restore  
This cargo that I bring her—a world's wealth,  
The golden springs of all the power of Spain,  
The jewelled hearts of all those cruel realms  
(For I have plucked them out) beyond the sea;  
Lest she be driven to yield them up again  
For Rome and Rome's delight, I will warp out  
Behind St. Nicholas' Island. The fierce plague  
In Plymouth shall be colour and excuse,  
Until my courier return from court  
With Gloriana's will. If it be death,  
I'll out again to sea, strew its rough floor  
With costlier largesses than kings can throw,  
And, ere I die, will singe the Spaniard's beard  
And set the fringe of his imperial robe  
Blazing along his coasts. Then let him roll  
His galleons round the little *Golden Hynde*,  
Bring her to bay, if he can, on the high seas,  
Ring us about with thousands, we'll not yield,  
I and my *Golden Hynde*, we will go down,  
With flag still flying on the last stump left us,  
And all my cannon spitting out the fires  
Of everlasting scorn into his face."

## DRAKE

---

So Drake warped out the *Golden Hynde* anew  
Behind St. Nicholas' Island. She lay there,  
The small grey-golden centre of the world  
That raged all round her, the last hope, the star  
Of Protestant freedom, she, the outlawed ship  
Holding within her the great head and heart  
Of England's ocean power; and all the fleets  
That have enfranchised earth, in that small ship,  
Lay waiting for their doom.

Past her at night

Fisher-boats glided, wondering as they heard  
In the thick darkness the great songs they deemed  
Must oft have risen from many a lonely sea;  
For oft had Spaniards brought a rumour back  
Of that strange pirate who in royal state  
Sailed to a sound of violins, and dined  
With skilled musicians round him, turning all  
Battle and storm and death into a song.

## SONG

The same Sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,

## BOOK VII

---

The same and none other  
Wherever we be;  
With the same hope before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Ringed round with the sea.

No land in the ring of it  
Now, all around us  
Only the splendid  
Resurging unknown;  
How should we sing of it,  
This that hath found us  
By the great stars attended  
At midnight, alone?

Our highway none knoweth,  
Yet our blood hath discerned it!  
Clear, clear is our path now  
Whose foreheads are free,  
Where the hurricane bloweth  
Our spirits have learned it,  
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,  
The storm's way, the sea.

## DRAKE

---

When the waters lay breathless  
Gazing at Hesper  
Guarding that glorious  
Fruitage of gold,  
Heard we the deathless  
Wonderful whisper  
We follow, victorious  
To-night, as of old.

Ah, the broad miles of it  
White with the onset  
Of waves without number  
Warring for glee;  
Ah, the soft smiles of it  
Down to the sunset,  
Sacred for slumber  
The swan's bath, the sea !

When the breakers charged thundering  
In thousands all round us  
With a lightning of lances  
Up-hurtled on high,  
When the stout ships were sundering  
A rapture hath crowned us

## BOOK VII

---

Like the wild light that dances  
On the crests that flash by.

*Our highway none knoweth,  
Yet our blood hath discerned it!  
Clear, clear is our path now  
Whose foreheads are free,  
Where Euroclydon bloweth  
Our spirits have learned it,  
'Tis the highway of wrath, now,  
The storm's way, the sea!*

Who now will follow us  
Where England's flag leadeth us,  
Where gold not inveigles,  
Nor statesmen betray?  
Tho' the deep midnight swallow us,  
Let her cry when she needeth us,  
We return, her sea-eagles,  
The hurricane's way.

*For the same Sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,  
The same and none other*

## DRAKE

---

*Wherever we be;  
With the same hope before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Ringed round with the sea.*

So six days passed, and on the seventh returned  
The courier, with a message from the Queen  
Summoning Drake to court, bidding him bring  
Also such curious trifles of his voyage  
As might amuse her, also be of good cheer  
She bade him, and rest well content his life  
In Gloriana's hands were safe: so Drake  
Laughingly landed with his war-bronzed crew  
Amid the wide-eyed throng on Plymouth beach  
And loaded twelve big pack-horses with pearls  
Beyond all price, diamonds, crosses of gold,  
Rubies that smouldered once for Aztec kings,  
And great dead Incas' gem-encrusted crowns.  
Also, he said, we'll add a sack or twain  
Of gold doubloons, pieces of eight moidores,  
And such-like Spanish trash, for those poor lords  
At court, lilies that toil not neither spin,

## BOOK VII

---

Wherfore, methinks their purses oft grow lean  
In these harsh times. 'Twere even as well their  
tongues  
Wagged in our favour, now, as in our blame.

• • • •  
Six days thereafter a fearful whisper reached  
Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain  
In London, that the pirate Drake was now  
In secret conference with the Queen; nay more,  
That he, the Master-thief of the golden world,  
Drake, even he, that bloody buccaneer,  
Had six hours' audience with her Majesty  
Daily—nay, more, walked with her in her garden  
Alone, among the fiery Autumn leaves,  
Talking of God knows what, and suddenly  
The temporizing diplomatic voice  
Of caution he was wont to expect from England  
And blandly accept as his imperial due  
Changed to a ringing key of firm resolve,  
Resistance—nay, defiance. For when he came  
Demanding audience of the Queen, behold!  
Her officers of state with mouths awry  
Informed the high ambassador of Spain,

## DRAKE

---

Despite his pomp and circumstance, the Queen  
Could not receive him, being in conference  
With some rough seaman, pirate, what you will,  
A fellow made of bronze, a buccaneer,  
Maned like a lion, bearded like a pard,  
With hammered head, clamped jaws and great  
    deep eyes  
That burned with fierce blue colours of the brine,  
'And liked not Spain—Drake! 'Twas the very  
    name,  
One Francis Drake! A Titan that had stood,  
Thundering commands against the thundering  
    heavens,  
Of lightning-shattered, storm-swept decks and  
    drunk  
Great draughts of glory from the rolling sea,  
El Draque! El Draque! Nor could she promise  
    aught  
To Spain's ambassador, nor see his face  
Again, while yet one Spanish musketeer  
Remained in Ireland.

Vainly the Spaniard raged  
Of restitution, recompense; for now

## BOOK VII

---

Had Drake brought up the little *Golden Hynde*  
To London, and the rumour of her wealth  
Out-topped the wild reality. The crew  
Were princes as they swaggered down the streets  
In weather-beaten splendour. Out of their doors  
To wonder and stare the jostling citizens ran  
When They went by; and through the length and  
breadth  
Of England, now, the gathering glory of life  
Shone like the dawn. O'er hill and dale it  
streamed,  
Dawn, everlasting and almighty dawn,  
Making a golden pomp of every oak—  
Had not its British brethren swept the seas?—  
In each remotest hamlet, by the hearth,  
The cart, the grey church-porch, the village pump,  
By meadow and mill and old manorial hall,  
By turnpike and by tavern, farm and forge,  
Men staved the crimson vintage of romance  
And held it up against the light and drank it,  
And with it drank confusion to the wrath  
That menaced England, but eternal honour,  
While blood ran in their veins, to Francis Drake.

## BOOK VIII

**M**EANWHILE, young Bess of Sydenham, the queen  
Of Drake's deep heart, imprisoned  
in her home,  
Fenced by her father's angry watch and ward  
Lest he—the poor plebeian dread of Spain,  
Shaker of nations, king of the untamed seas—  
Might win some word with her, sweet Bess, the  
flower,  
Triumphant o'er their rusty heraldries,  
Waited her lover, as in ancient tales  
The pale princess from some grey wizard's tower  
Midmost the deep sigh of enchanted woods  
Looks for the starry flash of her knight's shield;  
Or on the further side o' the magic West  
Sees pushing through the ethereal golden gloom  
Some blurred black prow, with loaded colours  
coarse,  
Clouded with sunsets of a mortal sea,

## BOOK VIII

---

And rich with earthly crimson. She, with lips  
Apart, still waits the shattering golden thrill  
When it shall grate the coasts of Fairyland.

Only, to Bess of Sydenham, there came  
No sight or sound to break that frozen spell  
And lonely watch, no message from her love,  
Or none that reached her restless helpless hands.  
Only the general rumour of the world  
Borne to her by the gossip of her maid  
Kept the swift pictures flashing through her brain  
Of how the *Golden Hynde* was hauled ashore  
At Deptford through a sea of exultation,  
And by the Queen's command was now set up  
For an everlasting memory!  
Of how the Queen with subtle statecraft still  
Kept Spain at arm's length, dangling, while she  
played  
At fast and loose with France, whose embassy,  
Arriving with the marriage treaty, found  
(And trembled at her daring, since the wrath  
Of Spain seemed, in their eyes, to flake with foam  
The storm-beat hulk) a gorgeous banquet spread

## DRAKE

---

To greet them on that very *Golden Hynde*  
Which sacked the Spanish Main, a gorgeous feast,  
The like of which old England had not seen  
Since the bluff days of boisterous King Hal,  
Great shields of brawn with mustard, roasted  
swans,  
Haunches of venison, roasted chines of beef,  
And chewets baked, big olive-pyes thereto,  
And sallets mixed with sugar and cinnamon,  
White wine, rose-water, and candied eringoes.  
There, on the outlawed ship, whose very name  
Rang like a blasphemy in the imperial ears  
Of Spain (its every old worm-eaten plank  
Being scored with scorn and courage that not storm  
Nor death, nor all their Inquisition racks,  
The white-hot irons and bloody branding whips  
That scarred the back of Rome's pale  
galley-slaves,  
Her captured English seamen, ever could daunt),  
There with huge Empires waiting for one word,  
One breath of colour and excuse, to leap  
Like wolves at the naked throat of her small isle,  
There in the eyes of the staggered world she stood,

## BOOK VIII

---

Great Gloriana, while the live decks reeled  
With flash of jewels and flush of rustling silks,  
She stood with Drake, the corsair, and her people  
Surged like a sea around. There did she give  
Open defiance with her agate smile  
To Spain. "Behold this pirate, now," she cried,  
"Whose head my Lord, the Invincible, Philip of  
Spain  
Demands from England. Kneel down, Master  
Drake,  
Kneel down; for now have I this gilded sword  
Wherewith to strike it off. Nay, thou my lord  
Ambassador of France, since I be woman,  
And squeamish at the sight of blood, give thou  
The accolade. With that jest she gave the hilt  
(Thus, even in boldness, playing a crafty part,  
And dangling France before the adventurous  
deed)  
To Marchaumont; and in the face of Europe,  
With that huge fleet in Cadiz and the whole  
World-power of Spain crouching around her isle,  
Knighted the master-thief of the unknown world,  
Sir Francis Drake.

## DRAKE

---

And then the rumour came  
Of vaster privateerings planned by Drake  
Against the coasts of Philip; but held in check  
And fretting at the leash, as ever the Queen  
Clung to her state-craft, while Drake's enemies  
Worked in the dark against him. Spain had set  
An emperor's ransom on his life. At home  
John Doughty, treacherous brother of that traitor  
Who met his doom by Drake's own hand, intrigued  
With Spain abroad and Spain's dark emissaries  
At home to avenge his brother. Burleigh still  
Beset Drake's path with pitfalls: treacherous greed  
For Spain's blood-money daggered all the dark  
Around him, and John Doughty without cease  
Sought to make use of all; until, by chance,  
Drake gat the proof of treasonable intrigue  
With Spain, against him, up to the deadly hilt,  
And hurled him into the Tower.

Many a night  
She sat by that old casement nigh the sea  
And heard its ebb and flow. With soul erect  
And splendid now she waited, yet there came  
No message; and, she thought, he hath seen at last



QUEEN ELIZABETH KNIGHTING DRAKE ON BOARD *The Golden Hind* AT  
DEPTFORD, APRIL 4, 1581

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## BOOK VIII

---

My little worth. And when her maiden sang,  
With white throat throbbing softly in the dusk  
And fingers gently straying o'er the lute,  
As was her wont at twilight, some old song  
Of high disdainful queens and lovers pale  
Pining a thousand years before their feet,  
She thought, " Oh, if my lover loved me yet,  
My heart would break for joy to welcome him :  
Perchance his true pride will not let him come,  
Since false pride barred him out " ; and yet again  
She burned with shame, thinking, " to him such  
pride

Were matter for a jest. Ah no, he hath seen  
My little worth." Even so, one night she sat,  
One dark rich summer night, thinking him far  
Away, wrapped in the multitudinous cares  
Of one that seemed the steersman of the State  
Now, thro' the storm of Europe; while her maid  
Sang to the lute, and soft sea-breezes brought  
Wreathed scents and sighs of secret waves and  
flowers  
Warm through the casement's muffling jasmine  
bloom.

## DRAKE

---

### SONG

#### I

*Nymphs and naiads, come away,—  
Love lies dead!  
Cover the cast-back golden head,  
Cover the lovely limbs with may,  
And with fairest boughs of green,  
And many a rose-wreathed briar spray:  
But let no hateful yew be seen  
Where Love lies dead.*

#### II

*Let not the queen that would not hear,  
(Love lies dead!)  
Or beauty that refused to save,  
Exult in one dejected tear;  
But gather the glory of the year,  
The pomp and glory of the year,  
The triumphing glory of the year,  
And softly, softly, softly shed  
Its light and fragrance round the grave  
Where Love lies dead.*

## BOOK VIII

---

The song ceased. Far away the great sea slept,  
'And all was very still. Only hard by  
One bird-throat poured its passion through the  
gloom,  
And the whole night seemed breathlessly listening,  
'As though earth's fairies, at the moon's command,  
Had muffled all the flower-bells in the world,  
That God might hear His nightingale.

A twig  
Snapped, the song ceased, the intense dumb night  
was all  
One passion of expectation—as if that song  
Were prelude, and ere long the heavens and earth  
Would burst into one great triumphant psalm.  
The song ceased only as if that small bird-throat  
Availed no further. Would the next great chord  
Ring out from harps in flaming seraph hands  
Ranged through the sky? The night watched,  
breathless, dumb.

Bess listened. Once again a dry twig snapped  
Beneath her casement, and a face looked up,  
Draining her face of blood, of sight, of life,  
Whispering, a voice from far beyond the stars,

## DRAKE

---

Whispering, unutterable joy, the whole  
Glory of life and death in one small word—  
*Sweetheart!*

The jasmine at her casement shook:  
She knew no more than he was at her side;  
His arms were round her, and his breath beat  
    warm  
Against her cheek.

• • • • •  
Suddenly, nigh the house,  
A deep-mouthed mastiff bayed and a foot crunched  
The gravel. “Ah, hark! they are watching for  
thee,” she cried.  
He laughed: “There’s half of Europe on the  
    watch  
Outside for my poor head. ’Tis cosier here  
With thee; but now”—his face grew grave, he  
    drew  
A silken ladder from out his doublet—“quick,  
Before yon good gamekeeper rounds the house  
We must be down.” And ere the words were out  
Bess reached the path, and Drake was at her side.  
Then into the star-stabbed shadow of the woods

## BOOK VIII

---

They sped, his arm around her. Suddenly  
She drew back with a cry, as four grim faces,  
With hand to forelock, glimmered in their way.  
Laughing she saw their storm-beat friendly smile  
Welcome their doughty captain in this new  
Adventure. Far away, once more they heard  
The mastiff bay; then nearer, as if his nose  
Were down upon the trail; and then a cry  
As of a hot pursuit. They reached the brook,  
Hurrying to the deep. Drake lifted Bess  
In his arms, and down the watery bed they  
splashed  
To baffle the clamouring hunt. Then out of the  
woods  
They came, on the seaward side, and Bess, with  
a shiver,  
Saw starlight flashing from bare cutlasses,  
As the mastiff bayed still nearer. Swiftlier now  
They passed along the bare blunt cliffs, and saw  
The furrow ploughed by that strange cannon-shot  
Which saved this hour for Bess; down to the  
beach  
And starry foam that churned the silver gravel

## DRAKE

---

Around an old black lurching boat, a strange  
Grim Charon's wherry for two lovers' flight,  
Guarded by old Tom Moone. Drake took her  
hand,

And with one arm around her waist, her breath  
Warm on his cheek for a moment, in she stepped  
Daintily o'er the gunwale and took her seat,  
His throned princess, beside him at the helm,  
Backed by the glittering waves, his throned  
princess,

With jewelled throat and glorious hair that  
seemed  
Flashing back scents and colours to a sea  
Which lived but to reflect her loveliness.

Then, all together, with their brandished oars  
The seamen thrust as a heavy mounded wave  
Lifted the boat; and up the flowering breast  
Of the next they soared, then settled at the  
thwarts,  
And the fierce water boiled before their blades,  
While with Drake's iron hand upon the helm  
They plunged and ploughed across the starlit seas

## BOOK VIII

---

To where a small black lugger at anchor swung,  
Dipping her rakish bows i' the liquid moon.  
Small was she, but not fangless; for Bess saw,  
With half a tremor, the dumb protective grin  
Of four grim guns above the tossing boat.  
But ere his seamen or his sweetheart knew  
What power, as of a wind, bore them along,  
Anchor was up, the sails were broken out,  
'And as they scudded down the dim grey coast  
Of a new enchanted world (for now had Love  
Made all things new and strange) the skilled  
musicians  
Upraised, at Drake's command, a song to cheer  
Their midnight path across that faery sea.

### SONG

#### I

Sweet, what is love? 'Tis not the crown of kings,  
Nay, nor the fire of white seraphic wings!  
Is it a child's heart leaping while he sings?

Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

## DRAKE

---

### II

Love like a child around our world doth run,  
Happy, happy, happy for all that God hath done,  
Glad of all the little leaves dancing in the sun,  
**Even so say I;**  
**Even so say I.**

### III

Sweet, what is love? 'Tis not the burning bliss  
'Angels know in heaven! God blows the world  
    a kiss  
Wakes on earth a wild-rose! 'Ah, who knows not  
    this?  
**Even so say I;**  
**Even so say I.**

### IV

Love, love is kind! Can it be far away,  
Lost in a light that blinds our little day?  
Seems it a great thing? Sweetheart, answer nay;  
**Even so say I;**  
**Even so say I.**

## BOOK VIII

---

### V

Sweet, what is love? The dust beneath our feet,  
Whence breaks the rose and all the flowers that  
greet

April and May with lips and heart so sweet;  
Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

### VI

Love is the dust whence Eden grew so fair,  
Dust of the dust that set my lover there,  
Ay, and wrought the gloriole of Eve's gold hair,

Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

### VII

Also the springing spray, the little topmost flower  
Swung by the bird that sings a little hour,  
Earth's climbing spray into the heaven's blue  
bower,

Even so say I;  
Even so say I.

## DRAKE

---

And stranger, ever stranger, grew the night  
Around those twain, for whom the fleecy moon  
Was but a mightier Cleopatra's pearl  
Dissolving in the rich dark wine of night,  
While 'mid the tenderer talk of eyes and hands  
And whispered nothings, his imperial dreams  
Rolled round their gloomy barge, robing its hulk  
With splendours Rome and Egypt never knew.  
Old ocean was his Nile, his mighty queen  
An English maiden purer than the dawn,  
His cause the cause of Freedom, his reward  
The glory of England. Strangely simple, then,  
Simple as life and death, anguish and love,  
To Bess appeared those mighty dawning dreams,  
Whereby he shaped the pageant of the world  
To a new purpose, strangely simple all  
Those great new waking tides i' the world's great  
soul  
That set towards the fall of Spain and Rome  
Behind a thunderous roar of ocean triumph  
O'er burning ships and shattered fleets, while  
England  
Grasped with sure hands the sceptre of the sea,

## BOOK VIII

---

That untamed realm of Liberty which none  
Had looked upon as aught but wilderness  
Ere this, or even dreamed of as the seat  
Of power and judgment and high sovereignty  
Whereby all nations at the last should make  
One brotherhood, and war should be no more.  
And ever, as the vision broadened out,  
The sense of some tremendous change at hand,  
The approach of vast Armadas and the dawn  
Of battle, reddening the diviner dawn  
With clouds, confused it, till once more the song  
Rang out triumphant o'er the glittering sea.

### SONG

#### I

*Ye that follow the vision  
Of the world's weal afar,  
Have ye met with derision  
And the red laugh of war;  
Yet the thunder shall not hurt you,  
Nor the battle-storms dismay;  
Tho' the sun in heaven desert you,  
“Love will find out the way.”*

## DRAKE

---

### II

*When the pulse of hope falters,  
When the fire flickers low  
On your faith's crumbling altars,  
And the faithless gods go;  
When the fond hope ye cherished  
Cometh, kissing, to betray;  
When the last star hath perished,  
“Love will find out the way.”*

### III

*When the last dream bereaveth you,  
And the heart turns to stone;  
When the last comrade leaveth you  
In the desert alone,  
With the whole world before you  
Clad in battle-array,  
And the starless night o'er you,  
“Love will find out the way.”*

### IV

*Your 'dreamers may 'dream it  
The shadow of a dream,*

## BOOK VIII

---

*Your sages may deem it  
A bubble on the stream,—  
Yet our kingdom draweth nigher  
With each dawn and every day;  
Through the earthquake and the fire  
“Love will find out the way.”*

### V

*Love will find it, tho' the nations  
Rise up blind, as of old,  
And the new generations  
Wage their warfares of gold;  
Tho' they trample child and mother  
As red clay into the clay,  
Where brother wars with brother,  
“Love will find out the way.”*

Dawn, ever bearing some divine increase  
Of beauty, love, and wisdom round the world,  
Dawn, like a wild-rose in the fields of heaven  
Washed grey with dew, awoke, and found the  
barque  
At anchor in a little land-locked bay.

## DRAKE

---

A crisp breeze blew, and all the living sea  
Beneath the flower-soft colours of the sky,  
Now like a myriad-petalled rose and now  
Innumerable scalloped into shells  
Of rosy fire, with dwindling wrinkles edged  
Fainter and fainter to the unruffled glow  
And soft white pallor of the distant deep,  
Shone with a mystic beauty for those twain  
Who watched the gathering glory; and, in an  
hour,

Drake and sweet Bess, attended by a guard  
Of four swart seamen, with bare cutlasses,  
And by the faithful eyes of old Tom Moone,  
Went up the rough rock-steps and twisted street  
Oh, the small white sparkling seaport, tow'rs the  
church

Where, hand in hand, before God's altar they,  
With steadfast eyes, did plight eternal troth,  
And so were wedded. Never a chime of bells  
Had they; but as they passed from out the porch  
Between the sleeping graves, a skylark soared  
Above the world in an ecstasy of song,  
And, quivering heavenwards, lost himself in light.

## BOOK IX

**N**OW like a white-cliffed fortress Eng-  
land shone  
Amid the mirk of chaos; for the huge  
Empire of Spain was but the dusky  
van

Of that dread night beyond all nights and days,  
Night of the last corruption of a world  
Fast-bound in misery and iron, with chains  
Of priest and king and feudal servitude,  
Night of the fettered flesh and ravaged soul,  
Night of anarchic chaos, darkening the deep,  
Swallowing up cities, kingdoms, empires, gods,  
With vaster gloom approaching, till the sun  
Of love was blackened, the moon of faith was  
blood.

All round our England, our small struggling star,  
Fortress of freedom, rock o' the world's desire,  
Bearing at last the hope of all mankind,  
The thickening darkness surged, and close at hand

## D R A K E

---

Those first fierce cloudy fringes of the storm,  
The Armada sails, gathered their might; and  
Rome  
Crouched close behind them with her screaming  
fires  
And steaming shambles,—Rome, the hell-hag,  
crouched,  
Still grasping with red hand the cross of Christ  
By its great hilt, pointing it like a dagger,  
Spear-head of the ultimate darkness, at the  
throat  
Of England. Under Philip's feet at last  
Writhed all the Protestant Netherlands, dim  
coasts  
Right over against us, whence his panoplies  
Might suddenly whelm our isle. But all night  
long,  
On many a mountain, many a guardian height,  
From Beachy Head to Skiddaw, little groups  
Of seamen, torch and battle-lanthorn nigh,  
Watched by the brooding unlit beacons, piled  
Of furze and gorse, funereal peat, rough logs,  
Reeking with oil, 'mid sharp scents of the sea,

## BOOK IX

---

Waste trampled grass and heather and close-cropped thyme,  
High o'er the thundering coast, among whose rocks  
Far, far below, the pacing coast-guards gazed  
Steadfastly seaward through the loaded dusk.  
And through that deepening gloom when, as it seemed,  
All England held her breath in one grim doubt,  
Swift rumours flashed from North to South as runs  
The lightning round a silent thunder-cloud;  
And there were muttering crowds i' the London streets,  
And hurrying feet i' the brooding Eastern ports.  
All night, dark inns, gathering the country-side,  
Reddened with clashing auguries of war.  
All night, i' the ships of Plymouth Sound, the soul  
Of Francis Drake was England, and all night  
Her singing seamen by the silver quays  
Polished their guns and waited for the dawn.  
But hour by hour that night grew deeper. Spain

## DRAKE

---

Watched, cloud by cloud, her huge Armadas  
grow;

Watched, tower by tower and zone by zone, her  
fleets

Grapple the sky with a hundred hands and drag  
Whole sea-horizons into her menacing ranks,  
Joining her powers to the fierce night, while  
Philip

Still strove, with many a crafty word, to lull  
The fears of Gloriana, till his plots  
Were ripe, his armaments complete; and still  
Great Gloriana took her woman's way,  
Preferring ever tortuous intrigue  
To battle, since the stakes had grown so great;  
Now, more than ever, hoping against hope  
To find some subtler means of victory;  
Yet not without swift impulses to strike,  
Swiftly recalled. Blind, yet not blind, she smiled  
On Mary of Scotland waiting for her throne,—  
A throne with many a strange dark tremour  
thrilled

Now as the rumoured murderous mines below  
Converged towards it, mine and countermine,

## BOOK IX

---

Till the live earth was honeycombed with death.  
Still with her agate smile, still she delayed,  
Holding her pirate admiral in the leash,  
Till Walsingham, nay, even the hunchback  
Burleigh,  
That crafty king of statesmen, seeing at last  
The inevitable thunder-crash at hand,  
Grew heart-sick with delay and ached to shatter  
The tense tremendous hush that seemed to oppress  
All hearts, compress all brows, load the broad  
night  
With more than mortal menace.

Only once  
The night was traversed with one lightning flash,  
One rapier stroke from England, at the heart  
Of Spain, as swiftly parried, yet no less  
A fiery challenge; for Philip's hate and scorn  
Growing with his Armada's growth, he lured  
With promises of just and friendly trade  
A fleet of English corn-ships to relieve  
His famine-stricken coast. There as they lay  
Within his ports he seized them, one and all,  
To fill the Armada's maw.

## D R A K E

---

Whereat the Queen,  
Passive so long, summoned great Walsingham,  
And, still averse from open war, despite  
The battle-hunger burning in his eyes,  
With one strange swift sharp agate smile she  
    hissed,  
“Unchain *El Draque!*”

A lightning flash indeed  
Was this; for he whose little *Golden Hynde*  
With scarce a score of seamen late had scourged  
The Spanish Main; he whose piratic neck  
Scarcely the Queen's most wily statecraft saved  
From Spain's revenge; he, privateer to the eyes  
Of Spain, but England to all English hearts,  
Gathered together, in all good jollity,  
All help and furtherance himself could wish,  
Before that moon was out, a pirate fleet  
Whereof the like old ocean had not seen—  
Eighteen swift cruisers, two great battleships,  
With pinnaces and store-ships and a force  
Of nigh three thousand men, wherewith to singe  
The beard o' the King of Spain.

By night they gathered



PHILIP II, KING OF SPAIN

*From the Painting by Titian*



## BOOK IX

---

In marvellous wind-whipt inns nigh Plymouth Sound,

Not secretly as, ere the *Golden Hynde*  
Burst thro' the West, that small adventurous crew  
Gathered beside the Thames, tossing the phrase  
“*Pieces of eight*” from mouth to mouth, and  
singing

Great songs of the rich Indies, and those tall  
Enchanted galleons, red with blood and gold,  
Superb with rubies, glorious as clouds,  
Clouds i' the sun, with mighty press of sail  
Dragging the sunset out of the unknown world,  
And staining all the grey old seas of Time  
With rich romance; but these, though privateers,  
Or secret knights on Gloriana's quest,  
Recked not if round the glowing magic door  
Of every inn the townsfolk grouped to hear  
The storm-scarred seamen toasting Francis Drake,  
Nor heeded what blithe urchin faces pressed  
On each red-curtained magic casement, bright  
With wild reflection of the fires within,  
The fires, the glasses and the singing lips  
Lifting defiance to the powers of Spain.

## DRAKE

---

### SONG

Sing we the Rose,  
The flower of flowers most glorious!  
Never a storm that blows  
Across our English sea  
But its heart breaks out wi' the Rose  
On England's flag victorious,  
The triumphing flag that flows  
Thro' the heavens of Liberty.

Sing we the Rose,  
The flower of flowers most beautiful!  
Until the world shall end  
She blossometh year by year,  
Red with the blood that flows  
For England's sake, most dutiful,  
Wherefore now we bend  
Our hearts and knees to her.

Sing we the Rose,  
The flower, the flower of war it is,  
Where deep i' the midnight gloom

## BOOK IX

---

Its waves are the waves of the sea,  
And the glare of battle grows,  
    And red over hulk and spar it is,  
Till the grim black broadsides bloom  
    With our Rose of Victory.

Sing we the Rose,  
    The flower, the flower of love it is,  
Which lovers aye shall sing  
    And nightingales proclaim;  
For oh, the heaven that glows,  
    That glows and burns above it is  
Freedom's perpetual Spring,  
    Our England's faithful fame.

Sing we the Rose,  
    That Eastward still shall spread for us  
Upon the dawn's bright breast,  
    Red leaves wi' the foam impearled;  
And onward ever flows  
    Till eventide make red for us  
A Rose that sinks i' the West  
    And surges round the world;  
    Sing we the Rose!

## DRAKE

---

One night as, with his great vice-admiral,  
Frobisher, his rear-admiral, Francis Knollys,  
And Thomas Fenner, his flag-captain, Drake  
Took counsel at his tavern, there came a knock,  
The door opened, and cold as from the sea  
The gloom rushed in, and there against the night,  
Clad as it seemed with wind and cloud and rain,  
Glittered a courtier, whom by face and form  
All knew for the age's brilliant paladin,  
Sidney, the king of courtesy, a star  
Of chivalry. The seamen stared at him,  
Each with a hand upon the red-lined chart  
Outspread before them. Then all stared at  
Drake,  
Who crouched like a great bloodhound o'er the  
table,  
And rose with a strange light burning in his eyes;  
For he remembered how, three years agone,  
That other courtier came, with words and smiles  
Copied from Sidney's self; and in his ears  
Rang once again the sound of the headsman's ax  
Upon the desolate Patagonian shore  
Beneath Magellan's gallows. With a voice

## BOOK IX

---

So harsh himself scarce knew it, he desired  
This fair new courtier's errand. With grim eyes  
He scanned the silken knight from head to foot,  
While Sidney, smiling graciously, besought  
Some place in their adventure. Drake's clenched  
fist

Crashed down on the old oak table like a rock,  
Splintering the wood and dashing his rough wrist  
With blood, as he thundered, "By the living God,  
No! We've no room for courtiers, now! We  
leave

All that to Spain."

Whereat, seeing Sidney stood  
Amazed, Drake, drawing nearer, said, "You ask  
More than you dream: I know you for a knight  
Most perfect and most gentle—yea, a man  
Ready to die on any battle-field  
To save a wounded friend" (even so said Drake,  
Not knowing how indeed this knight would die,—  
Yea, yield the cup of water from his lips  
To save a wounded soldier, saying, "His need  
Is greater! ")

Drake outstretched his bleeding hand

## D R A K E

---

And pointed through the door to where the gloom  
Glimmered with bursting spray, and the thick  
night

Was all one wandering thunder of hidden seas  
Rolling out of Eternity: " You'll find  
No purple fields of Arcady out there,  
No shepherds piping in those boisterous valleys,  
No sheep among those roaring mountain-tops,  
No lists of feudal chivalry. I've heard  
That voice cry death to courtiers. 'Tis God's  
voice.

Take you the word of one who has occupied  
His business in great waters. There's no room,  
Meaning, or reason, office, or place, or name  
For courtiers on the sea. Does the sea flatter?  
You cannot bribe it, torture it, or tame it!  
Its laws are those of the Juggernaut universe,  
Remorseless—listen to that! "—a mighty wave  
Broke thundering down the coast; " your hands are  
white,  
Your rapier jewelled, can you grapple that?  
What part have you in all its flaming ways?  
What share in its fierce gloom? Has your heart  
broken

## BOOK IX

---

As those waves break out there? Can you lie  
down

And sleep, as a lion-cub by the old lion,  
When it shakes its mane out over you to hide you,  
'And leap out with the dawn as I have done?  
These are big words; but, see, my hand is red:  
You cannot torture me, I have borne all that;  
And so I have some kinship with the sea,  
Some sort of wild alliance with its storms.  
Its exultations, ay, and its great wrath  
At last, and power upon them. 'Tis the worse  
For Spain. Be counselled well: come not between  
My sea and its rich vengeance."

Silently,

Bowing his head, Sidney withdrew. But Drake,  
So fiercely the old grief rankled in his heart,  
Summoned his swiftest horseman, bidding him  
ride,  
Ride like the wind through the night, straight to  
the Queen,  
Praying she would most instantly recall  
Her truant courtier. Nay, to make all sure,  
Drake sent a gang of seamen out to crouch  
'Ambushed in woody hollows nigh the road,

## DRAKE

---

Under the sailing moon, there to waylay  
The Queen's reply, that she might never know  
It reached him, if it proved against his will.

And swiftly came that truant's stern recall;  
But Drake, in hourly dread of some new change  
In Gloriana's mood, slept not by night  
Or day, till out of roaring Plymouth Sound  
The pirate fleet swept to the wind-swept main,  
And took the wind and shook out all its sails.  
Then with the unfettered sea he mixed his soul  
In great rejoicing union, while the ships  
Crashing and soaring o'er the heart-free waves  
Drove ever straight for Spain.

Water and food  
They lacked; but the fierce fever of his mind  
To sail from Plymouth ere the Queen's will  
changed

Had left no time for these. Right on he drove,  
Determining, though the Queen's old officers  
Beneath him stood appalled, to take in stores  
Of all he needed,—water, powder, food,—  
By plunder of Spain herself. In Vigo Bay,

## BOOK IX

---

Close to Bayona town, under the cliffs  
Of Spain's world-wide and thunder-fraught  
prestige

He anchored, with the old sea-touch that wakes  
Our England still. There, in the tingling ears  
Of the world he cried, *En garde!* to the King of  
Spain.

There, ordering out his pinnaces in force,  
While a great storm, as if he held indeed  
Heaven's batteries in reserve, growled o'er the sea,  
He landed. Ere one cumbrous limb of all  
The monstrous armaments of Spain could move  
His ships were stored; and ere the sword of Spain  
Stirred in its crusted sheath, Bayona town  
Beheld an empty sea; for like a dream  
The pirate fleet had vanished, none knew whither.  
But, in its visible stead, invisible fear  
Filled the vast rondure of the sea and sky  
As with the omnipresent soul of Drake.  
For when Spain saw the small black anchored fleet  
Ride in her bays, the sight set bounds to fear.  
She knew at least the ships were oak, the guns  
Of common range: nor did she dream e'en Drake

## DRAKE

---

Could sail two seas at once. Now all her coasts  
Heard him all night in every bursting wave,  
His topsails gleamed in every moonlit cloud;  
His battle-lanthorns glittered in the stars  
That hung the low horizon. He became  
A universal menace; yet there followed  
No sight or sound of him, unless the sea  
Were that grim soul incarnate. Did it not roar  
His great commands? The very spray that lashed  
The cheeks of Spanish seamen lashed their  
hearts  
To helpless hatred of him. The wind sang  
*El Draque* across the rattling blocks and sheets  
When storms perplexed them; and when ships  
went down,  
As under the fury of his onsetting battle,  
The drowning sailors cursed him while they sank.

Suddenly a rumour shook the Spanish Court:  
He has gone once more to the Indies. Santa Cruz,  
High Admiral of Spain, the most renowned  
Captain in Europe, clamoured for a fleet  
Of forty sail instantly to pursue.

## BOOK IX

---

For unto him whose little *Golden Hynde*  
Was weapon enough, now leading such a squadron,  
The West Indies, the whole Pacific coast,  
And the whole Spanish Main, lay at his mercy.  
And onward over the great grey gleaming sea  
Swept like a thunder-cloud the pirate fleet  
With vengeance in its heart. Five years agone,  
Young Hawkins, in the Cape Verde Islands, met—  
At Santiago—with such treachery  
As Drake burned to requite, and from that hour  
Was Santiago doomed. His chance had come;  
Drake swooped upon it, plundered it, and was  
gone,  
Leaving the treacherous isle a desolate heap  
Of smoking ashes in the leaden sea,  
While onward all those pirate bowsprits plunged  
Into the golden West, across the broad  
Atlantic once again; “For I will show,”  
Said Drake, “that Englishmen henceforth will  
sail  
Old ocean where they will.” Onward they surged,  
And the great glittering crested majestic waves  
Jubilantly rushed up to meet the keels,

## DRAKE

---

And there was nought around them but the grey  
Ruin and roar of the huge Atlantic seas,  
Grey mounded seas, pursuing and pursued,  
That fly, hounded and hounding on for ever,  
From empty marge to marge of the grey sky.  
Over the wandering wilderness of foam,  
Onward, through storm and death, Drake swept;  
    for now

Once more a fell plague gripped the tossing ships,  
And not by twos and threes as heretofore  
His crews were minished; but in three black days  
Three hundred seamen in their shotted shrouds  
Were cast into the deep. Onward he swept,  
Implacably, having in mind to strike  
Spain in the throat at St. Domingo, port  
Of Hispaniola, a city of far renown,  
A jewel on the shores of old romance,  
Palm-shadowed, gated with immortal gold,  
Queen city of Spain's dominions over sea,  
And guarded by great guns. Out of the dawn  
The pirate ships came leaping, grim and black,  
And ere the Spaniards were awake, the flag  
Of England floated from their topmost tower.

## BOOK IX

---

But since he had not troops enough to hold  
So great a city, Drake entrenched his men  
Within the Plaza and held the batteries.  
Thence he demanded ransom, and sent out  
A boy with flag of truce. The boy's return  
Drake waited long. Under a sheltering palm  
He stood, watching the enemies' camp; and, lo!  
Along the hot white purple-shadowed road  
Tow'ards him, a crawling shape writhed through  
the dust

Up to his feet, a shape besmeared with blood—  
'A shape that held the stumps up of its wrists  
And moaned, an eyeless thing: a naked rag  
Of flesh obscenely mangled, a small face  
Hideously puckered, shrivelled like a monkey's,  
With lips drawn backward from its teeth.

“ Speak, speak,  
In God's name, speak, what art thou ? ” whispered  
Drake,  
And a sharp cry came, answering his dread—  
'A cry as of a sea-bird in the wind  
Desolately astray from all earth's shores:  
“ Captain, I am thy boy, only thy boy !

## D R A K E

---

See, see, my captain: see what they have done!  
Captain, I only bore the flag; I only——”

“O lad, lad, lad!” moaned Drake, and stooping  
strove

To pillow the mangled head upon his arm.

“What have they done to thee; what have they  
done?”

And at the touch, the boy screamed once and died.

Then like a savage sea with arms uplift  
To heaven the wrath of Drake blazed thundering,

“Eternal God, be this the doom of Spain!

Henceforward have no pity. Send the strength  
Of Thy great seas into my soul, that I

May devastate this empire—this red hell

They make of Thy good earth.”

His men drew round,  
Staring in horror at the silent shape

That daubed his feet. Like a cold wind

His words went through their flesh:

“ This is the lad  
That bore our flag of truce. This hath Spain  
done.

## BOOK IX

---

Look well upon it; draw the smoke of the blood  
Up into your nostrils, my companions,  
'And down into your souls. This makes an end  
For Spain! Bring forth the Spanish prisoners  
And let me look on them."

Forth they were brought,  
A swarthy gorgeous band of soldiers, priests,  
And sailors, hedged between two sturdy files  
Of British tars with naked cutlasses.  
Close up to Drake they halted, under the palm,  
Gay smiling prisoners, for they thought their  
friends  
Had ransomed them. Then they looked up and  
met  
A glance that swept athwart them like a sword,  
Making the blood strain back from their blanched  
faces  
Into their quivering hearts, with unknown dread,  
As that accuser pointed to the shape  
Before his feet.

"Dogs, will ye lap his blood  
Before ye die? Make haste; for it grows cold!  
Ye will not, will not even dabble your hands

## DRAKE

---

In that red puddle of flesh, what? Are ye  
Spaniards?

Come, come, I'll look at you; perchance there's  
one

That's but a demi-devil and holds you back."

And with the word Drake stepped among their  
ranks

And read each face among the swarthy crew—

The gorgeous soldiers, ringleted sailors, priests

With rosary and cross, a slender page

In scarlet with a cloud of golden hair,

And two rope-girdled friars.

The slim page  
Drake drew before the throng. "You are young,"  
he said,

"Go; take this message to the camp of Spain:  
Tell them I have a hunger in my soul  
To look upon the murderers of this boy,  
To see what eyes they have, what manner of  
mouths;

To touch them and to take their hands in mine,  
And draw them close to me and smile upon them  
Until they know my soul as I know theirs,  
And they grovel in the dust and grope for mercy.

## BOOK IX

---

Say that, until I get them, every day  
I'll hang two Spaniards, though I dispeople  
The Spanish Main. Tell them that, every day,  
I'll burn a portion of their city down,  
Then find another city and burn that,  
And then burn others till I burn away  
Their empire from the world—ay, till I reach  
The imperial throne of Philip with my fires,  
And send it shrieking down to burn in hell  
For ever. Go!"

Then Drake turned once again  
To face the Spanish prisoners. With a voice  
Cold as the passionless utterance of Fate  
His grim command went forth. "Now, provost-  
marshal,  
Begin with yon two friars, in whose faces  
Chined like singed swine, and eyed with the spent  
coals  
Of filthy living, sweats the glory of Rome  
And Spain combined, strip off their leprous rags  
And twist their ropes around their throats and  
hang them  
High over the Spanish camp for all to see.  
At dawn I'll choose two more."

## BOOK X

**A**CROSS the Atlantic  
Great rumours rushed as of a mighty  
wind,  
The wind of the spirit of Drake. But  
who shall tell  
In this cold age the power that he became  
Who drew the universe within his soul  
And moved with cosmic forces? Though the deep  
Divided it from Drake, the gorgeous court  
Of Philip shuddered away from the streaming  
coasts  
As a wind-cuffed field of golden wheat. The  
King,  
Bidding his guests to a feast in his own ship  
On that wind-darkened sea, was made a mock,  
As one by one his ladies proffered excuse  
For fear of That beyond. Round Europe now  
Ballad and story told how in the cabin  
Of Francis Drake there hung a magic glass

## BOOK X

---

Wherein he saw the fleets of all his enemies  
And all that passed aboard them. Rome herself,  
Perplexed that this proud heretic should prevail,  
Fostered a darker dream that Drake had bought,  
Like old Norse wizards, power to loose or bind  
The winds at will.

And now a wilder tale  
Flashed o'er the deep—of a distant blood-red dawn  
O'er San Domingo, where the embattled troops  
Of Spain and Drake were met—but not in war—  
Met in the dawn, by his compelling will,  
To offer up a sacrifice. Yea, there  
Between the hosts, the hands of Spain herself  
Slaughtered the Spanish murderers of the boy  
Who had borne Drake's flag of truce; offered  
them up  
As a blood-offering and an expiation,  
Lest Drake, with that dread alchemy of his soul,  
Should e'en transmute the dust beneath their feet  
To one same substance with the place of pain  
And whelm them suddenly in the eternal fires  
Rumour on rumour rushed across the sea,  
Large mockeries, and one most bitter of all,

## DRAKE

---

Wormwood to Philip, of how Drake had stood  
I' the governor's house at San Domingo, and seen  
'A mighty scutcheon of the King of Spain  
Wheron was painted the terrestrial globe,  
And on the globe a mighty steed in act  
To spring into the heavens, and from its mouth  
Streaming like smoke a scroll, and on the scroll  
Three words of flame and fury—*Non sufficit*  
*Orbis*—of how Drake and his seamen stood  
Gazing upon it, and could not forbear  
From summoning the Spaniards to expound  
Its meaning, whereupon a hurricane roar  
Of mirth burst from those bearded British lips,  
And that immortal laughter shook the world.

So, while the imperial warrior eyes of Spain  
Watched, every hour, her vast Armada grow  
Readier to launch and shatter with one stroke  
Our island's frail defence, fear gripped her still,  
For there came sounds across the heaving sea  
Of secret springs unsealed, forces unchained,  
'A mustering of deep elemental powers,  
'A sound as of the burgeoning of boughs

## BOOK X

---

In universal April and dead hearts  
Uprising from their tombs; a mighty cry  
Of resurrection, surging through the souls  
Of all mankind. For now the last wild tale  
Swept like another dawn across the deep;  
And, in that dawn, men saw the slaves of Spain,  
The mutilated negroes of the mines,  
With gaunt backs wealed and branded, scarred  
and seared  
By whip and iron, in Spain's brute lust for gold,  
Saw them, at Drake's great liberating word  
Burst from their chains, erect, uplifting hands  
Of rapture to the glad new light that then,  
Then first, began to struggle thro' the clouds  
And crown all manhood with a sacred crown  
August—a light which, though from age to age  
Clouds may obscure it, grows and still shall grow,  
Until that Kingdom come, that grand Communion,  
That Commonweal, that Empire, which still draws  
Higher with every hour, that Federation,  
That turning of the wasteful strength of war  
To accomplish large and fruitful tasks of peace,

## DRAKE

---

That gathering up of one another's loads,  
Whereby the weak are strengthened and the strong  
Made stronger in the increasing good of all.  
Then, suddenly, it seemed, as he had gone,  
A ship came stealing into Plymouth Sound  
And Drake was home again, but not to rest;  
For scarce had he cast anchor ere the road  
To London rang beneath the flying hoofs  
That bore his brief despatch to Burleigh, saying—  
“We have missed the Plate Fleet by but twelve  
hours' sail,  
The reason being best known to God. No less  
We have given a cooling to the King of Spain.  
There is a great gap opened which, methinks,  
Is little to his liking. We have sacked  
The towns of his chief Indies, burnt their ships,  
Captured great store of gold and precious stones,  
Three hundred pieces of artillery,  
The more part brass. Our loss is heavy indeed,  
Under the hand of God, eight hundred men,  
Three parts of them by sickness. Captain Moone,  
My trusty old companion, he that struck  
The first blow in the South Seas at a Spaniard,

## BOOK X

---

Died of a grievous wound at Cartagena.  
My fleet and I are ready to strike again  
At once, where'er the Queen and England please.  
I pray for her commands, and those with speed,  
That I may strike again." Outside the scroll  
These words were writ once more—" My Queen's  
commands  
I much desire, your servant, Francis Drake."

This terse despatch the hunchback Burleigh read  
Thrice over, with the broad cliff of his brow  
Bending among his books. Thrice he assayed  
To steel himself with caution as of old;  
And thrice, as a glorious lightning running along  
And flashing between those simple words, he saw  
The great new power that lay at England's hand,  
An ocean sovereignty—a power unknown  
Before, but dawning now; a power that swept  
All earth's old plots and counterplots away  
Like straws; the germ of an unmeasured force  
New-born, that laid the source of Spanish might  
At England's mercy! Could that force but grow  
Ere Spain should nip it, ere the mighty host

## D R A K E

---

That waited in the Netherlands even now,  
That host of thirty thousand men encamped  
Round Antwerp, under Parma, should embark  
Convoyed by that Invincible Armada  
To leap at England's throat! Thrice he assayed  
To think of England's helplessness, her ships  
Little and few. Thrice he assayed to quench  
With caution the high furnace of his soul  
Which Drake had kindled. As he read the last  
Rough simple plea, *I wait my Queen's commands,*  
His deep eyes flashed with glorious tears.

He leapt  
To his feet and cried aloud, "Before my God,  
I am proud, I am very proud for England's sake!  
This Drake is a terrible man to the King of Spain."

And still, still, Gloriana, brooding darkly  
On Mary of Scotland's doom, who now at last  
Was plucked from out her bosom like a snake  
Hissing of war with France, a queenly snake,  
A Lilith in whose lovely gleaming folds  
And sexual bonds the judgment of mankind  
Writhes even yet half-strangled, meting out

## BOOK X

---

Wild execrations on the maiden Queen  
Who quenched those jewelled eyes and mixt with  
dust  
That white and crimson, who with cold sharp steel  
In substance and in spirit, severed the neck  
And straightened out those glittering supple coils  
For ever; though for evermore will men  
Lie subject to the unforgotten gleam  
Of diamond eyes and cruel crimson mouth,  
And curse the sword-bright intellect that struck  
Like lightning far through Europe and the world  
For England, when amid the embattled fury  
Of world-wide empires, England stood alone.  
Still she held back from war, still disavowed  
The deeds of Drake to Spain; and yet once more  
Philip, resolved at last never to swerve  
By one digressive stroke, one ell or inch  
From his own patient, sure, laborious path,  
Accepted her suave plea, and with all speed  
Pressed on his huge emprise until it seemed  
His coasts groaned with grim bulks of cannonry,  
Thick loaded hulks of thunder and towers of  
doom;

## DRAKE

---

And, all round Antwerp, Parma still prepared  
To hurl such armies o'er the rolling sea  
As in all history hardly the earth herself  
Felt shake with terror her own green hills and  
plains.

*I wait my Queen's commands!* Despite the plea  
Urged every hour upon her with the fire  
That burned for action in the soul of Drake.  
Still she delayed, till on one darkling eve  
She gave him audience in that glimmering room  
Where first he saw her. Strangely sounded there  
The seaman's rough strong passion as he poured  
His heart before her, pleading—"Every hour  
Is one more victory lost," and only heard  
The bitter answer—"Nay, but every hour  
Is a breath snatched from the unconquerable  
Doom, that awaits us if we are forced to war.  
Yea, and who knows?—though Spain may forge  
a sword,  
Its point is not inevitably bared  
Against the breast of England!" As she spake,  
The winds without clamoured with clash of bells,  
There was a gleam of torches and a roar—

## BOOK X

---

*Mary, the traitress of the North, is dead.  
God save the Queen!*

Her head bent down: she wept.

“ Pity me, friend, though I be queen, O yet  
My heart is woman, and I am sore pressed  
On every side,—Scotland and France and Spain  
Beset me, and I know not where to turn.”

Even as she spake, there came a hurried step  
Into that dim, rich chamber. Walsingham  
Stood there, before her, without ceremony  
Thrusting a letter forth: “ At last,” he cried,  
“ Your Majesty may read the full intent  
Of Spain and Rome. Here, plainly written out  
Upon this paper, worth your kingdom’s crown,  
This letter, stolen by a trusty spy,  
Out of the inmost chamber of the Pope  
Sixtus himself, here is your murder planned:  
Blame not your Ministers, who with such haste  
Plucked out this viper, Mary, from your breast!  
Read here—how, with his thirty thousand men,  
The pick of Europe, Parma joins the Scots,  
While Ireland, grasped in their Armada’s clutch,  
And the Isle of Wight, against our west and south

## DRAKE

---

Become their base."

"Rome, Rome, and Rome again,  
And always Rome," she muttered; "even here  
In England hath she thousands yet. She hath  
struck

Her curse out with pontific finger at me,  
Cursed me down and away to the bottomless pit.  
Her shadow like the shadow of clouds or sails,  
The shadow of that huge event at hand,  
Darkens the seas already, and the wind  
Is on my cheek that shakes my kingdom down.  
She hath thousands here in England, born and bred  
Englishmen. They will stand by Rome!"

"'Fore God,"  
Cried Walsingham, "my Queen, you do them  
wrong!

There is another Rome—not this that lurks  
And lies and plucks the world back into darkness,  
And stabs it there for gold. There is a City  
Whose eyes are tow'rd the morning; on whose  
heights

Blazes the Cross of Christ above the world;  
A Rome that shall wage warfare yet for God

## BOOK X

---

In the dark days to come—a Rome whose thought  
Shall march with our humanity and be proud  
To cast old creeds like seed into the ground,  
Watch the strange shoots and foster the new flower  
Of faiths we know not yet. Is this a dream?  
I speak as one by knighthood bound to speak;  
For even this day—and my heart burns with it—  
I heard the Catholic gentlemen of England  
Speaking in grave assembly. At one breath  
Of peril to our island, why, their swords  
Leapt from their scabbards, and their cry went up  
To split the heavens—*God save our English  
Queen!*"

Even as he spake there passed the rushing gleam  
Of torches once again, and as they stood  
Silently listening, all the winds ran wild  
With clamouring bells, and a great cry went up—  
*God save Elizabeth, our English Queen!*

"I'll vouch for some two hundred Catholic throats  
Among that thousand," whispered Walsingham  
Eagerly, with his eyes on the Queen's face.  
Then, seeing it brighten, fervently he cried,

## DRAKE

---

Pressing the swift advantage home, "O Madam,  
The heart of England now is all on fire!  
We are one people, as we never have been  
In all our history, all prepared to die  
Around your throne. Madam, you are beloved  
As never yet was English king or queen!"  
She looked at him, the tears in her keen eyes  
Glittered—"And I am very proud," she said,  
"But if our enemies command the world,  
And we have one small island and no more . . ."  
She ceased; and Drake, in a strange voice, hoarse  
and low,  
Trembling with passion deeper than all speech,  
Cried out—"No more than the great ocean sea  
Which makes the enemies' coast our frontier now;  
No more than that great Empire of the deep  
Which rolls from Pole to Pole, washing the world  
With thunder, that great Empire whose command  
This day is yours to take. Hear me, my Queen,  
This is a dream, a new dream, but a true;  
For mightier days are dawning on the world  
Than heart of man hath known. If England hold  
The sea, she holds the hundred thousand gates

## BOOK X

---

That open to futurity. She holds  
The highway of all ages. Argosies  
Of unknown glory set their sails this day  
For England out of ports beyond the stars.  
Ay, on the sacred seas we ne'er shall know  
They hoist their sails this day by peaceful quays,  
Great gleaming wharves i' the perfect City of  
God,  
If she but claim her heritage."

He ceased;

And the deep dream of that new realm, the sea,  
Through all the soul of Gloriana surged  
A moment; then, with splendid eyes that filled  
With fire of sunsets far away, she cried  
(Faith making her a child, yet queenlier still),  
"Yea, claim it thou for me!"

A moment there  
Trembling she stood. Then, once again, there  
passed  
A rush of torches through the gloom without,  
And a great cry "*God save Elizabeth,*  
*God save our English Queen!*"

"Yea go, then, go,"

## D R A K E

---

She said, " God speed you now, Sir Francis Drake,  
Not as a privateer, but with full powers,  
My Admiral-at-the-Seas ! "

Without a word

Drake bent above her hand and, ere she knew it,  
His eyes from the dark doorway flashed farewell,  
And he was gone. But ere he leapt to saddle  
Walsingham stood at his stirrup, muttering " Ride,  
Ride now like hell to Plymouth; for the Queen  
Is hard beset, and ere ye are out at sea  
Her mood will change. The friends of Spain will  
move

Earth and the heavens for your recall. They'll  
tempt her

With their false baits of peace, though I shall  
stand

Here at your back through thick and thin,—  
farewell ! "

Fire flashed beneath the hoofs, and Drake was  
gone.

Scarce had he vanished in the night than doubt  
Once more assailed the Queen. The death of  
Mary

## BOOK X

---

Had brought e'en France against her. Walsingham,

'And Burleigh himself, prime mover of that death,  
Being held in much disfavour for it, stood  
As helpless. Long ere Drake or human power,  
They thought, could put to sea, a courier sped  
To Plymouth bidding Drake forbear to strike  
At Spain, but keep to the high seas, and, lo!  
The roadstead glittered empty. Drake was gone!

Gone! Though the friends of Spain had poured  
their gold

To thin his ranks, and every hour his crews  
Deserted, he had laughed—"Let Spain buy scum!  
Next to an honest seaman I love best  
An honest landsman. What more goodly task  
Than teaching brave men seamanship?" He had  
filled

His ships with soldiers! Out in the teeth of the  
gale

That raged against him he had driven. In vain,  
Amid the boisterous laughter of the quays,  
A pinnace dashed in hot pursuit, and met

## D R A K E

---

A roaring breaker and came hurtling back  
With oars and spars all trailing in the foam,  
A tangled mass of wreckage and despair.  
Sky swept to stormy sky: no sail could live  
In that great yeast of waves; but Drake was gone!

Then, once again, across the rolling sea  
Great rumours rushed of how he had sacked the  
port

Of Cadiz and had swept along the coast  
To Lisbon, where the whole Armada lay,  
Had snapped up prizes under its very nose,  
And taunted Santa Cruz, High Admiral  
Of Spain, striving to draw him out for fight,  
And offering, if his course should lie that way,  
To convoy him to Britain, taunted him  
So bitterly that for once, in the world's eyes  
A jest had power to kill; for Santa Cruz  
Died with the spleen of it, since he could not move  
Before the appointed season. Then there came  
Flying back home, the Queen's old Admiral  
Borough, deserting Drake, and all aghast  
At Drake's temerity: "For," he said, "this man,

## BOOK X

---

Thrust o'er my head, against all precedent,  
Bade me follow him into harbour mouths  
A-flame with cannon like the jaws of death,  
Wherat I much demurred; and straightway

Drake

Clapped me in irons, me—an officer  
And Admiral of the Queen; and, though my voice  
Was all against it, plunged into the pit  
Without me, left me with some word that burns  
And rankles in me still, making me fear  
The man was mad, some word of lonely seas  
A desert island and a mutineer  
And dead Magellan's gallows. Sirs, my life  
Was hardly safe with him. Why, he resolved  
To storm the Castle of St. Vincent, sirs,  
A castle on a cliff, grinning with guns,  
Well-known impregnable! The Spaniards fear  
Drake; but to see him land below it and bid  
Surrender, sirs, the strongest fort of Spain  
Without a blow, they laughed! And straightway  
he,  
With all the fury of Satan, turned that cliff  
To hell itself. He sent down to the ships

## D R A K E

---

For faggots, broken oars, beams, bowsprits, masts,  
And piled them up against the outer gates,  
Higher and higher, and fired them. There he  
                stood

Amid the smoke and flame and cannon-shot,  
This Admiral, like a common seaman, black  
With soot, besmeared with blood, his naked arms  
Full of great faggots, labouring like a giant  
And roaring like Apollyon. Sirs, he is mad!  
But did he take it, say you? Yea, he took it,  
The mightiest stronghold on the coast of Spain,  
Took it and tumbled all its big brass guns  
Clattering over the cliffs into the sea.  
But, sirs, ye need not raise a cheer so loud!  
It is not warfare. 'Twas a madman's trick,  
A devil's!"

Then the rumour of a storm  
That scattered the fleet of Drake to the four winds  
Disturbed the heart of England, as his ships  
Came straggling into harbour, one by one,  
Saying they could not find him. Then, at last,  
When the storm burst in its earth-shaking might  
Along our coasts, one night of rolling gloom

## BOOK X

---

His cannon woke old Plymouth. In he came  
Across the thunder and lightning of the sea  
With his grim ship of war, and close behind  
A shadow like a mountain or a cloud  
Torn from the heaven-high panoplies of Spain,  
A captured galleon loomed, and round her prow  
A blazoned scroll, whence (as she neared the quays  
Which many a lanthorn swung from brawny fist  
Yellowed) the sudden crimson of her name  
*San Filipe* flashed o'er the white sea of faces,  
And a rending shout went skyward that outroared  
The blanching breakers—"Tis the heart of  
Spain!

The great *San Filipe!*" Overhead she towered,  
The mightiest ship afloat; and in her hold  
The riches of a continent, a prize  
Greater than earth had ever known; for there  
Not only ruby and pearl like ocean beaches  
Heaped on some wizard coast in that dim hull  
Blazed to the lanthorn light; not only gold  
Gleamed, though of gold a million would not buy  
Her store; but in her cabin lay the charts  
And secrets of the wild unwhispered wealth

## DRAKE

---

Of India—secrets that splashed London wharves  
With coloured dreams and made her misty streets  
Flame like an Eastern City when the sun  
Shatters itself on jewelled domes and spills  
Its crimson wreckage thro' the silvery palms.  
And of those dreams the far East India quest  
Began: the first foundation-stone was laid  
Of our great Indian Empire, and a star  
Began to tremble on the brows of England  
That Time can never darken.

But now the seas

Darkened indeed with menace; now at last  
The cold wind of the black approaching wings  
Of Azrael crept across the deep: the storm  
Throbbed with their thunderous pulse, and ere  
that moon  
Waned, a swift gunboat foamed into the Sound  
With word that all the Invincible Armada  
Was hoisting sail for England.

Even now,  
Elizabeth, torn a thousand ways, withheld  
The word for which Drake pleaded as for life,

## BOOK X

---

That he might meet them ere they left their coasts,  
Meet them or ever they reached the Channel, meet  
them

Now, or—"Too late! too late!" At last his voice  
Beat down e'en those that blindly dinned her ears  
With chatter of meeting Spain on British soil;  
And swiftly she commanded (seeing once more  
The light that burned amid the approaching  
gloom

In Drake's deep eyes) Lord Howard of  
Effingham,

High Admiral of England, straight to join him  
At Plymouth Sound. "How many ships are  
wanted?"

She asked him, thinking "we are few, indeed!"  
"Give me but sixteen merchantmen," he said,  
"And but four battleships, by the mercy of God,  
I'll answer for the Armada!" Out to sea  
They swept, in the teeth of a gale; but vainly  
Drake

Strove to impart the thought wherewith his mind  
Travailed—to win command of the ocean sea  
By bursting on the fleets of Spain at once

## D R A K E

---

Even as they left their ports, not as of old  
To hover in a vain dream of defence  
Round fifty threatened points of British coast,  
But Howard, clinging to his old-world order,  
Flung out his ships in a loose, long, straggling line  
Across the Channel, waiting, wary, alert,  
But powerless thus as a string of scattered sea-gulls  
Beating against the storm. Then, flying to meet  
them,

A merchantman brought terror down the wind,  
With news that she had seen that monstrous host  
Stretching from sky to sky, great hulks of doom,  
Dragging death's midnight with them o'er the sea  
Tow'rds England. Up to Howard's flag-ship  
Drake

In his immortal battle-ship—*Revenge*,  
Rushed thro' the foam, and thro' the swirling seas  
His pinnace dashed alongside. On to the decks  
O' the tossing flag-ship, like a very Viking  
Shaking the surf and rainbows of the spray  
From sun-smit lion-like mane and beard he stood  
Before Lord Howard in the escutcheoned poop  
And poured his heart out like the rending sea

## BOOK X

---

In passionate wave on wave:

“If yonder fleet  
Once reach the Channel, hardly the mercy of God  
Saves England! I would pray with my last  
breath,

Let us beat up to windward of them now,  
And handle them before they reach the Channel.”  
“Nay; but we cannot bare the coast,” cried  
Howard,

“Nor have we stores of powder or food enough!”  
“My lord,” said Drake, with his great arm  
outstretched,

“There is food enough in yonder enemy’s ships,  
And powder enough and cannon-shot enough!  
We must revictual there. Look! look!” he cried,  
And pointed to the heavens. As for a soul  
That by sheer force of will compels the world  
To work his bidding, so it seemed the wind  
That blew against them slowly veered. The sails  
Quivered, the skies revolved. A northerly breeze  
Awoke, and now, behind the British ships,  
Blew steadily tow’rds the unseen host of Spain.

“It is the breath of God,” cried Drake, “they lie

## DRAKE

---

Wind-bound, and we may work our will with  
them.

Signal the word, Lord Howard, and drive down!"  
And as a man convinced by Heaven itself  
Lord Howard ordered, straightway, the whole  
fleet  
To advance.

And now, indeed, as Drake foresaw,  
The Armada lay, beyond the dim horizon,  
Wind-bound and helpless in Corunna Bay,  
At England's mercy, could her fleet but draw  
Nigh enough, with its fire-ships and great guns  
To windward. Nearer, nearer league by league  
The ships of England came; till Ushant lay  
Some seventy leagues behind. Then, yet once  
more

The wind veered, straight against them. To  
remain

Beating against it idly was to starve:  
And, as a man whose power upon the world  
Fails for one moment of exhausted will,  
Drake, gathering up his forces as he went  
For one more supreme effort, turned his ship

## B O O K X

---

Tow'rd Plymouth, and retreated with the rest.

There, while the ships refitted with all haste  
And ax and hammer rang, one golden eve  
Just as the setting sun began to fringe  
The clouds with crimson, and the creaming waves  
Were one wild riot of fairy rainbows, Drake  
Stood with old comrades on the close-cropped  
green

Of Plymouth Hoe, playing a game of bowls.  
Far off unseen, a little barque, full-sail,  
Struggled and leapt and strove tow'rd Plymouth  
Sound,

Noteless as any speckled herring-gull  
Flickering between the white flakes of the waves.  
A group of schoolboys with their satchels lay  
Stretched on the green, gazing with great wide  
eyes

Upon their seamen heroes, as like gods  
Disporting with the battles of the world  
They loomed, tossing black bowls like cannon-balls  
Against the rosy West, or lounged at ease  
With faces olive-dark against that sky

## D R A K E

---

Laughing, while from the neighbouring inn mine  
host,

White-aproned and blue-jerkined, hurried out  
With foaming cups of sack, and they drank deep,  
Tossing their heads back under the golden clouds  
And burying their bearded lips. The hues  
That slashed their doublets, for the boys' bright  
eyes

[(Even as the gleams of Grecian cloud or moon  
Revealed the old gods) were here rich dusky  
streaks

Of splendour from the Spanish Main, that shone  
But to proclaim these heroes. There a boy  
More bold crept nearer to a slouched hat thrown  
Upon the green, and touched the silver plume,  
And felt as if he had touched a sunset-isle  
Of feathery palms beyond a crimson sea.  
Another stared at the blue rings of smoke  
A storm-scarred seaman puffed from a long pipe  
Primed with the strange new herb they had lately  
found

In far Virginia. But the little ship  
Now plunging into Plymouth Bay none saw.

## B O O K X

---

E'en when she had anchored and her straining  
boat  
Had touched the land, and the boat's crew over  
the quays  
Leapt with a shout, scarce was there one to heed.  
A seaman, smiling, swaggered out of the inn  
Swinging in one brown hand a gleaming cage  
Wherein a big green parrot chattered and clung  
Fluttering against the wires. A troop of girls  
With arms linked paused to watch the game of  
bowls;  
And now they flocked around the cage, while one  
With rosy finger tempted the horny beak  
To bite. Close overhead a sea-mew flashed  
Seaward. Once, from an open window, soft  
Through trellised leaves, not far away, a voice  
Floated—a voice that flushed the cheek of Drake,  
The voice of Bess, bending her glossy head  
Over the broidery frame, in a quiet song.  
The song ceased. Still, with rainbows in their  
eyes,  
The schoolboys watched the bowls like cannon-  
balls

## DRAKE

---

Roll from the hand of gods along the turf.  
Suddenly, tow'rs the green, a little cloud  
Of seamen, shouting, stumbling, as they ran  
Drew all eyes on them. The game ceased. A  
voice

Rough with the storms of many an ocean roared,  
“Drake! Cap’en Drake! The Armada!  
They are in the Channel! We sighted them—  
A line of battle-ships! We could not see  
An end of them. They stretch from east to west  
Like a great storm of clouds, glinting with guns,  
From sky to sky!”

So, after all his strife,  
The wasted weeks had tripped him, the fierce hours  
Of pleading for the sea’s command, great hours  
And golden moments, all were lost. The fleet  
Of Spain had won the Channel without a blow.  
All eyes were turned on Drake, as he stood there  
A giant against the sunset and the sea  
Looming, alone. Far off, the first white star  
Gleamed in a rosy space of heaven. He tossed  
A grim black ball i’ the lustrous air and laughed,—  
“Come, lads,” he said, “we’ve time to finish the  
game!”

## BOOK XI

**F**EW minutes, and well wasted those, were  
spent  
On that great game of bowls; for well  
knew Drake  
What panic threatened Plymouth, since his fleet  
Lay trapped there by the black headwind that  
blew  
Straight up the Sound, and Plymouth town itself,  
Except the ships won seaward ere the dawn,  
Lay at the Armada's mercy. Never a seaman  
Of all the sea-dogs clustered on the quays,  
And all the captains clamouring round Lord  
Howard,  
Hoped that one ship might win to the open sea :  
At dawn, they thought, the Armada's rolling  
guns  
To windward, in an hour, must shatter them,  
Huddled in their red slaughter-house like sheep.

Now was the great sun sunken and the night

## DRAKE

---

Dark. Far to Westward, like the soul of man  
Fighting blind nature, a wild flare of red  
Upon some windy headland suddenly leapt  
And vanished flickering into the clouds. Again  
It leapt and vanished: then all at once it streamed  
Steadily as a crimson torch upheld  
By Titan hands to heaven. It was the first  
Beacon! A sudden silence swept along  
The seething quays, and in their midst appeared  
Drake.

Then the jubilant thunder of his voice  
Rolled, buffeting the sea-wind far and nigh,  
And ere they knew what power as of a sea  
Surged through them, his immortal battle-ship  
*Revenge* had flung out cables to the quays,  
And while the seamen, as he had commanded,  
Knotted thick ropes together, he stood apart  
(For well he knew what panic threatened still)  
Whittling idly at a scrap of wood,  
And carved a little boat out for the child  
Of some old sea companion.  
So great and calm a master of the world  
Seemed Drake that, as he whittled, and the chips

## BOOK XI

---

Fluttered into the blackness over the quay,  
Men said that in this hour of England's need  
Each tiny flake turned to a battle-ship;  
For now began the lanthorns, one by one,  
To glitter, and half-reveal the shadowy hulks  
Before him.—So the huge old legend grew,  
Not all unworthy the Homeric age  
Of gods and godlike men.

St. Michael's Mount,  
Answering the first wild beacon far away,  
Rolled crimson thunders to the stormy sky!  
The ropes were knotted. Through the panting  
dark

Great heaving lines of seamen all together  
Hauled with a shout, and all together again  
Hauled with a shout against the roaring wind;  
And slowly, slowly, onward tow'rd the sea  
Moved the *Revenge*, and seaward ever heaved  
The brawny backs together, and in their midst,  
Suddenly, as they slackened, Drake was there  
Hauling like any ten, and with his heart  
Doubling the strength of all, giving them joy  
Of battle against those odds,—Ay, till they found

## D R A K E

---

Delight i' the burning tingle of the blood  
That even their hardy hands must feel besmear  
The harsh, rough, straining ropes. There as they  
toiled,

Answering a score of hills, old Beachy Head  
Streamed like a furnace to the rolling clouds.  
Then all around the coast each windy ness  
And craggy mountain kindled. Peak from peak  
Caught the tremendous fire, and passed it on  
Round the bluff East and the black mouth of  
Thames,—

Ay, Northward to the waste wild Yorkshire fells  
And gloomy Cumberland, where, like a giant,  
Great Skiddaw grasped the red tempestuous brand,  
And thrust it up against the reeling heavens.  
Then all night long, inland, the wandering winds  
Ran wild with clamour and clash of startled bells;  
All night the cities seethed with torches, flashed  
With twenty thousand flames of burnished steel;  
While over the trample and thunder of hooves  
blazed forth

The lightning of wild trumpets. Lonely lanes  
Of country darkness, lit by cottage doors  
Entwined with rose and honeysuckle, roared

## BOOK XI

---

Like mountain torrents now—East, West, and South,  
As to the coasts with pike and musket streamed  
The trained bands, horse and foot, from every town  
And every hamlet. All the shaggy hills  
From Milford Haven to the Downs of Kent,  
And up to Humber, gleamed with many a hedge  
Of pikes between the beacon's crimson glares;  
While in red London forty thousand men,  
In case the invader should prevail, drew swords  
Around their Queen. All night in dark St. Paul's,  
While round it rolled a multitudinous roar  
As of the Atlantic on a Western beach,  
And all the leaning London streets were lit  
With fury of torches, rose the passionate prayer  
Of England's peril:

*O Lord God of Hosts,  
Let Thine enemies know that Thou hast taken  
England into Thine hands!*

The mighty sound  
Rolled, billowing round the kneeling aisles, then died,  
Echoing up the heights. A voice, far off,

## DRAKE

---

As on the cross of Calvary, caught it up  
And poured the prayer o'er that deep hush, alone:  
*We beseech thee, O God, to go before our armies,*  
*Bless and prosper them both by land and sea!*  
*Grant unto them Thy victory, O God,*  
*As thou usedst to do to Thy children when they*  
*please Thee!*  
*All power, all strength, all victory come from*  
*Thee!*  
Then from the lips of all those thousands burst  
A sound as from the rent heart of an ocean,  
One tumult, one great rushing storm of wings  
Cleaving the darkness round the Gates of Heaven:  
*Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses;*  
*But we will remember Thy name, O Lord, our*  
*God!*

So, while at Plymouth Sound her seamen toiled  
All through the night, and scarce a ship had won  
Seaward, the heart of England cried to God.  
*All night, while trumpets yelled and blared*  
*without,*  
*And signal cannon shook the blazoned panes,*

## BOOK XI

---

And billowing multitudes went thundering by,  
Amid that solemn pillared hush arose  
From lips of kneeling thousands one great prayer  
Storming the Gates of Heaven! *O Lord, our  
God,*

*Heavenly Father, have mercy upon our Queen,  
To whom Thy far dispersèd flock do fly  
In the anguish of their souls. Behold, behold,  
How many princes band themselves against her,  
How long Thy servant hath laboured to them for  
peace,*

*How proudly they prepare themselves for battle!  
Arise, therefore! Maintain Thine own cause,  
Judge Thou between her and her enemies!  
She seeketh not her own honour, but Thine,  
Not the dominions of others, but Thy truth,  
Not bloodshed, but the saving of the afflicted!  
Oh, rend the heavens, therefore, and come down,  
Deliver Thy people!*

*To vanquish is all one with Thee, by few  
Or many, want or wealth, weakness or strength.  
The cause is Thine, the enemies Thine, the afflicted  
Thine! The honour, victory, and triumph*

## DRAKE

---

*Thine! Grant her people now one heart, one  
mind,  
One strength. Give unto her councils and her  
captains  
Wisdom and courage strongly to withstand  
The forces of her enemies, that the fame  
And glory of Thy Kingdom may be spread  
Unto the ends of the world. Father, we crave  
This in Thy mercy, for the precious death  
Of Thy dear Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ!  
Amen.*

*And as the dreadful dawn thro' mist-wreaths  
broke,  
And out of Plymouth Sound at last, with cheers  
Ringing from many a thousand throats, there  
struggled  
Six little ships, all that the night's long toil  
Had warped down to the sea (but leading them  
The ship of Drake) there rose one ocean cry  
From all those worshippers—*Let God arise,*  
*And let His enemies be scattered!**

*Under the leaden fogs of that new dawn,*

## BOOK XI

---

Empty and cold, indifferent as death,  
The sea heaved strangely to the seamen's eyes,  
Seeing all round them only the leaden surge  
Wrapped in wet mists or flashing here and there  
With crumbling white. Against the cold wet wind  
Westward the little ships of England beat  
With short tacks, close inshore, striving to win  
The windward station of the threatening battle  
That neared behind the veil. Six little ships,  
No more, beat Westward, even as all mankind  
Beats up against that universal wind  
Whereon like withered leaves all else is blown  
Down one wide way to death: the soul alone,  
Whether at last it wins, or faints and fails,  
Stems the dark tide with its intrepid sails.  
Close-hauled, with many a short tack, struggled  
and strained,  
Northwest, Southwest, the ships; but ever West-  
ward gained  
Some little way with every tack; and soon,  
While the prows plunged beneath the grey-gold  
noon,  
Lapped by the crackling waves, even as the wind

## DRAKE

---

Died down a little, in the mists behind  
Stole out from Plymouth Sound the struggling  
score

Of ships that might not win last night to sea.  
They followed; but the Six went on before,  
Not knowing, alone, for God and Liberty.

Now, as they tacked Northwest, the sullen roar  
Of reefs crept out, or some strange bleating sound  
Of sheep upon the hills. Southwest once more  
The bo'sun's whistle swung their bowsprits round;

Southwest until the long low lapping splash  
Was all they heard of keels that still ran out  
Seaward, then with one muffled heave and crash  
Once more the whistles brought their sails about.

'And now the noon began to wane; the West  
With slow rich colours filled and shadowy forms,  
Dark curdling wreaths and fogs with crimsoned breast,  
And tangled zones of dusk like frozen storms,

Motionless, flagged with sunset, hulled with doom!  
Motionless? Nay, across the darkening deep

## BOOK XI

---

Surely the whole sky moved its gorgeous gloom  
Onward; and like the curtains of a sleep

The red fogs crumbled, mists dissolved away!  
There, like death's secret dawning thro' a dream,  
Great thrones of thunder dusked the dying day,  
And, higher, pale towers of cloud began to gleam.

There, in one heaven-wide storm, great masts and clouds  
Of sail crept slowly forth, the ships of Spain!  
From North to South, their tangled spars and shrouds  
Controlled the slow wind as with bit and rein;  
Onward they rode in insolent disdain  
Sighting the little fleet of England there,  
While o'er the sullen splendour of the main  
Three solemn guns tolled all their host to prayer,  
And their great ensign blazoned all the doom-fraught  
air.

The sacred standard of their proud crusade  
Up to the mast-head of their flag-ship soared:  
On one side knelt the Holy-Mother-maid,  
On one the crucified Redeemer paured  
His blood, and all their kneeling hosts adored

## D R A K E

---

Their saints, and clouds of incense heavenward  
streamed,  
While pomp of cannonry and pike and sword  
Down long sea-lanes of mocking menace gleamed,  
And chant of priests rolled out o'er seas that darkly  
dreamed.

*Who comes to fight for England?* Is it ye,  
Six little straws that dance upon the foam?  
Ay, sweeping o'er the sunset-crimsoned sea  
Let the proud pageant in its glory come,  
Leaving the sunset like a hecatomb  
Of souls whose bodies yet endure the chain!  
Let slaves, by thousands, branded, scarred and dumb,  
In those dark galleys grip their oars again,  
And o'er the rolling deep bring on the pomp of Spain;—  
  
Bring on the pomp of royal paladins  
(For all the princedoms of the land are there!)  
And for the gorgeous purple of their sins  
The papal pomp bring on with psalm and prayer:  
Nearer the splendour heaves; can ye not hear  
The rushing foam, not see the blazoned arms,  
And black-faced hosts thro' leagues of golden air

## BOOK XI

---

Crowding the decks, muttering their beads and charms  
To where, in furthest heaven, they thicken like locust-swarms?

Bring on the pomp and pride of old Castile,  
Blazon the skies with royal Aragon,  
Beneath Oquendo let old ocean reel,  
The purple pomp of priestly Rome bring on;  
And let her censers dusk the dying sun,  
The thunder of her banners on the breeze  
Following Sidonia's glorious galleon  
Deride the sleeping thunder of the seas,  
While twenty thousand warriors chant her litanies.

Lo, all their decks are kneeling! Sky to sky  
Responds! It is their solemn evening hour.  
**SALVE REGINA**, though the daylight die,  
**SALVE REGINA**, though the darkness lour;  
Have they not still the kingdom and the power?  
**SALVE REGINA**, hark, their thousands cry,  
From where like clouds to where like mountains tower  
Their crowded galleons looming far or nigh,  
**SALVE REGINA**, hark, what distant seas reply!

## D R A K E

---

What distant seas, what distant ages hear?  
Bring on the pomp! the sun of Spain goes down:  
The moon but swells the tide of praise and prayer;  
Bring on the world-wide pomp of her renown;  
Let darkness crown her with a starrier crown,  
And let her watch the fierce waves crouch and fawn  
Round those huge hulks from which her cannon frown,  
While close inshore the wet sea-mists are drawn  
Round England's Drake: then wait, in triumph, for the  
dawn.

The sun of Rome goes down; the night is dark!  
Still are her thousands praying, still their cry  
Ascends from the wide waste of waters, hark!  
*Ave Maria, darker grows the sky!*  
*Ave Maria, those about to die*  
*Salute thee!* Nay, what wandering winds blaspheme  
With random gusts of chilling prophecy  
Against the solemn sounds that heavenward stream!  
The night is come at last. Break not the splendid  
dream.

But through the misty darkness, close inshore,  
Northwest, Southwest, and ever Westward  
strained

## BOOK XI

---

The little ships of England, all night long,  
As down the coast the reddening beacons leapt,  
The crackle and lapping splash of tacking keels,  
The bo'sun's low sharp whistles and the whine  
Of ropes, mixing with many a sea-bird's cry  
Disturbed the darkness, waking vague swift fears  
Among the mighty hulks of Spain that lay,  
Nearest, then fading through the mists inshore  
Northwest, then growing again, but farther down  
Their ranks to Westward with each dark return  
And dark departure, till the rearmost rank  
Of grim sea-castles heard the swish and creak  
Pass plashing seaward thro' the wet sea-mists  
To windward now of all that monstrous host,  
Then heard no more than wandering sea-birds'  
cries  
Wheeling around their leagues of lanthorn-light,  
Or heave of waters, waiting for the dawn.

Dawn, everlasting and almighty dawn  
Rolled o'er the waters, the grey mists were fled:  
See, in their reeking heaven-wide crescent drawn  
Those masts and spars and cloudy sails, outspread

## D R A K E

---

Like one great sulphurous tempest soaked with red,  
In vain withstand the march of brightening skies:  
The dawn sweeps onward and the night is dead,  
And, lo! to windward, what bright menace lies,  
What glory kindles now in England's wakening eyes?

There, on the glittering plains of open sea,  
To windward now, behind the fleets of Spain,  
Two little files of ships are tossing free,  
Free of the winds and of the wind-swept main:  
Were they not trapped? Who brought them forth  
again,  
Free of the great new fields of England's war,  
With sails like blossoms shining after rain,  
And guns that sparkle to the morning star?  
Drake!—first upon the deep that rolls to Trafalgar!

And Spain knows well that flag of fiery fame,  
Spain knows who leads those files across the sea;  
Implacable, invincible, his name  
*El Draque*, creeps hissing through her ranks to lee;  
But now she holds the rolling heavens in fee,  
His ships are few. *They surge across the foam,*  
*The hunt is up!* But need the mountains flee

## BOOK XI

---

Or fear the snarling wolf-pack? Let them come!  
They crouch, but dare not leap upon the flanks of Rome.

Nearer they come and nearer! Nay, prepare!  
Close your huge ranks that sweep from sky to sky!  
Madness itself would shrink; but Drake will dare  
Eternal hell! Let the great signal fly—  
Close up your ranks; El Draque comes down to die!  
El Draque is brave! The vast sea-cities loom  
Thro' heaven: Spain spares one smile of chivalry,  
One wintry smile across her cannons' gloom  
As that frail fleet full-sail comes rushing tow'rds its  
doom.

Suddenly, as the wild change of a dream,  
Even as the Spaniards watched those lean sharp  
prows  
Leap straight at their huge hulks, watched well  
content,  
Knowing their foes, once grappled, must be  
doomed;  
Even as they caught the rush and hiss of foam  
Across that narrow, dwindling gleam of sea,  
And heard, abruptly close, the sharp commands

## DRAKE

---

And steady British answers, caught one glimpse  
Of bare-armed seamen waiting by their guns,  
The vision changed! The ships of England  
swerved

Swiftly—a volley of flame and thunder swept  
Blinding the buffeted air, a volley of iron  
From four sheer broadsides, crashing thro' a hulk  
Of Spain. She reeled, blind in the fiery surge  
And fury of that assault. So swift it seemed  
That as she heeled to leeward, ere her guns  
Trained on the foe once more, the sulphurous cloud  
That wrapped the sea, once, twice, and thrice again  
Split with red thunder-claps that rent and raked  
Her huge beams through and through. Ay, as  
she heeled

To leeward still, her own grim cannon belched  
Their lava skyward, wounding the void air,  
And, as by miracle, the ships of Drake  
Were gone. Along the Spanish rear they swept  
From North to South, raking them as they went  
At close range, hardly a pistol-shot away,  
With volley on volley. Never Spain had seen  
Seamen or marksmen like to these who sailed

## BOOK XI

---

Two knots against her one. They came and went,  
Suddenly neared or sheered away at will  
As if by magic, pouring flame and iron  
In four full broadsides thro' some Spanish hulk  
Ere one of hers burst blindly at the sky.  
Southward, along the Spanish rear they swept,  
Then swung about, and volleying sheets of flame,  
Iron, and death, along the same fierce road  
Littered with spars, reeking with sulphurous fumes,  
Returned, triumphantly rushing, all their sails  
Alow, aloft, full-bellied with the wind.

Then, then, from sky to sky, one mighty surge  
    Of baleful pride, huge wrath, stormy disdain,  
With shuddering clouds and towers of sail would urge  
    Onward the heaving citadels of Spain,  
Which dragged earth's thunders o'er the groaning main,  
    And held the panoplies of faith in fee,  
Beating against the wind, struggling in vain  
    To close with that swift ocean cavalry:  
Spain had all earth in charge! Had England, then, the  
    sea?

Spain had the mountains—mountains flow like clouds!

## DRAKE

---

Spain had great kingdoms—kingdoms melt away!  
Yet, in that crescent, army on army crowds,  
How shall she fear what seas or winds can say?—  
The seas that leap and shine round earth's decay,  
The winds that mount and sing while empires fall,  
And mountains pass like waves in the wind's way,  
And dying gods thro' shuddering twilights call;  
Had England, then, the sea that sweeps o'er one and  
all?

See, in gigantic wrath the *Rata* hurls  
Her mighty prows round to the wild sea-wind:  
The deep like one black maelstrom round her swirls  
While great Recaldé follows hard behind:  
Reeling, like Titans, thunder-blasted, blind,  
They strive to cross the ships of England—yea,  
Challenge them to the grapple, and only find  
Red broadsides bursting o'er the bursting spray,  
And England surging still along her windward way!

To windward still *Revenge* and *Raleigh* flash  
And thunder, and the sea flames red between:  
In vain against the wind the galleons crash  
And plunge and pour blind volleys thro' the screen

## BOOK XI

---

Of rolling sulphurous clouds at dimly seen  
Topsails that, to and fro, like sea-birds fly!  
Ever to leeward the great hulks careen;  
Their thousand cannon can but wound the sky,  
While England's little *Rainbow* foams and flashes by.

Suddenly the flag-ship of Recaldé, stung  
To fury it seemed, heeled like an avalanche  
To leeward, then reeled out beyond the rest  
Against the wind, alone, daring the foe  
To grapple her. At once the little *Revenge*  
With Drake's flag flying flashed at her throat,  
And hardly a cable's-length away out-belched  
Broadside on broadside, under those great cannon,  
Crashing through five-foot beams, four shots to  
one,  
While Howard and the rest swept to and fro  
Keeping at deadly bay the rolling hulks  
That looming like Leviathans now plunged  
Desperately against the freshening wind  
To rescue the great flag-ship where she lay  
Alone, amid the cannonades of Drake,  
Alone, like a volcanic island lashed

## D R A K E

---

With crimson hurricanes, dinning the winds  
With isolated thunders, flaking the skies  
With wrathful lava, while great spars and blocks  
Leapt through the cloudy glare and fell, far off,  
Like small black stones into the hissing sea.

Oquendo saw her peril far away!  
    His rushing prow thro' heaven begins to loom,  
Oquendo, first in all that proud array,  
    Hath heart the pride of Spain to reassume:  
He comes; the rolling seas are dusked with gloom  
    Of his great sails! Now round him once again,  
Thrust out your oars, ye mighty hulks of doom;  
    Forward, with hiss of whip and clank of chain!  
Let twice ten hundred slaves bring on the wrath of  
    Spain!

Sidonia comes! Toledo comes!—huge ranks  
    That rally against the storm from sky to sky,  
As down the dark blood-rusted chain-locked planks  
    Of labouring galleys the dark slave-guards ply  
Their knotted scourges, and the red flakes fly  
    From bare scarred backs that quiver and heave once  
more,

## BOOK XI

---

And slaves that heed not if they live or die  
Pull with numb arms at many a red-stained oar,  
Nor know the sea's dull crash from cannon's growing  
roar.

Bring on the wrath! From heaven to rushing heaven  
The white foam sweeps around their fierce array;  
In vain before their shattering crimson levin  
The ships of England flash and dart away:  
Not England's heart can hold that host at bay!  
See, a swift signal shoots along her line,  
Her ships are scattered; they fly, they fly like spray  
Driven against the wind by wrath divine,  
While, round Recaldé now, Sidonia's cannon shine.

The wild sea-winds with golden trumpets blaze!  
One wave will wash away the crimson stain  
That blots Recaldé's decks. Her first amaze  
Is over: down the Channel once again  
Turns the triumphant pageantry of Spain  
In battle-order, now. Behind her, far,  
While the broad sun sinks to the Western main,  
Glitter the little ships of England's war,  
And over them in heaven glides out the first white star.

The sun goes down: the heart of Spain is proud:

## DRAKE

---

Her censers fume, her golden trumpets blow!  
Into the darkening East with cloud on cloud  
    Of broad-flung sail her huge sea-castles go:  
Rich under blazoned poops like rose-flushed snow  
    Tosses the foam. Far off the sunset gleams:  
Her banners like a thousand sunsets glow,  
    As down the darkening East the pageant streams,  
Full-fraught with doom for England, rigged with  
    princely dreams.

Nay, "rigged with curses dark," as o'er the waves  
Drake watched them slowly sweeping into the  
    gloom  
That thickened down the Channel, watched them  
    go  
In ranks compact, roundels impregnable,  
With Biscay's bristling, broad-beamed squadron  
    drawn  
Behind for rear-guard. As the sun went down  
Drake flew the council-flag. Across the sea  
That gleamed still like a myriad-petaled rose  
Up to the little *Revenge* the pinnaces foamed.  
There, on Drake's powder-grimed escutcheoned  
    poop

## BOOK XI

---

They gathered, Admirals and great flag-captains,  
Hawkins, Frobisher, shining names and famous,  
And some content to serve and follow and fight  
Where duty called unknown, but heroes all.  
High on the poop they clustered, gazing East  
With faces dark as iron against the flame  
Of sunset, eagle-faces, iron lips,  
And keen eyes fiercely flashing as they turned  
Like sword-flames now, or dark and deep as night  
Watching the vast Armada slowly mix  
Its broad-flung sails with twilight where it dragged  
Thro' thickening heavens its curdled storm of  
clouds  
Down the wide darkening Channel.

“My Lord Howard,”  
Said Drake, “it seems we have but scarred the  
skins  
Of those huge hulks: the hour grows late for  
England.  
‘Twere well to handle them again at once.” A  
growl  
Of fierce approval answered; but Lord Howard  
Cried out, “Attack we cannot, save at risk

## DRAKE

---

Of our whole fleet. It is not death I fear,  
But England's peril. We have fought all day,  
Accomplished nothing! Half our powder is  
spent!

I think it best to hang upon their flanks  
Till we be reinforced!"

"My lord," said Drake,  
"Had we that week to spare for which I prayed,  
And were we handling them in Spanish seas,  
We might delay. There is no choosing now.  
Yon hulks of doom are steadfastly resolved  
On one tremendous path and solid end—  
To join their powers with Parma's thirty thousand  
(Not heeding our light horsemen of the sea),  
Then in one earthquake of o'erwhelming arms  
Roll Europe over England. They've not grasped  
The first poor thought which now and evermore  
Must be the sceptre of Britain, the steel trident  
Of ocean sovereignty. That mighty fleet  
Invincible, impregnable, omnipotent,  
Must here and now be shattered, never be joined  
With Parma, never abase the wind-swept sea,  
With oaken roads for thundering legions  
To trample in the splendour of the sun

## BOOK XI

---

From Europe to our island.

As for food,  
In yonder enemy's fleet there is food enough  
To feed a nation; ay, and powder enough  
To split an empire. I will answer for it  
Ye shall not lack of either, nor for shot,  
Not though ye pluck them out of your own beams  
To feed your hungry cannon. Cast your bread  
Upon the waters. Think not of the Queen!  
She will not send it! For she hath not known  
(How could she know) this wide new realm of  
hers,  
When we ourselves—her seamen—scarce have  
learnt  
What means this kingdom of the ocean sea  
To England and her throne—food, life-blood,  
life!  
She could not understand who, when our ships  
Put out from Plymouth, hardly gave them store  
Of powder and shot to last three fighting days,  
Or rations even for those. Blame not the Queen,  
Who hath striven for England as no king hath  
fought  
Since England was a nation. Bear with me,

## DRAKE

---

For I must pour my heart before you now  
This one last time. Yon fishing-boats have brought  
Tidings how on this very day she rode  
Before her mustered pikes at Tilbury.  
Methinks I see her riding down their lines  
High on her milk-white Barbary charger, hear  
Her voice—‘ My people, though my flesh be  
woman,  
My heart is of your kingly lion’s breed:  
I come myself to lead you ! ’ I see the sun  
Shining upon her armour, hear the voice  
Of all her armies roaring like one sea—  
*God save Elizabeth, our English Queen!*  
‘ God save her,’ I say, too; but still she dreams,  
As all too many of us—bear with me!—dream,  
Of Crecy, when our England’s war was thus;  
When we, too, hurled our hosts across the deep  
As now Spain dreams to hurl them on our isle.  
But now our war is otherwise. We claim  
The sea’s command, and Spain shall never land  
One swordsman on our island. Blame her not,  
But look not to the Queen. The people fight  
This war of ours, not princes. In this hour

## BOOK XI

---

God maketh us a people. We have seen  
Victories, never victory like to this,  
When in our England's darkest hour of need  
Her seamen, without wage, powder, or food,  
Are yet on fire to fight for her. Your ships  
Tossing in the great sunset of an Empire,  
Dawn of a sovereign people, are all manned  
By heroes, raggèd, hungry, who will die  
Like flies ere long, because they have no food  
But turns to fever-breeding carrion  
Not fit for dogs. They are half-naked, hopeless  
Living, of any reward; and if they die  
They die a dog's death. We shall reap the fame  
While they—great God! and all this cannot  
quench  
The glory in their eyes. They will be served  
Six at a mess of four, eking it out  
With what their own rude nets may catch by night,  
Silvering the guns and naked arms that haul  
Under the stars with silver past all price,  
While some small ship-boy in the black crow's nest  
Watches across the waters for the foe.  
My lord, it is a terrible thing for Spain

## DRAKE

---

When poor men thus go out against her princes;  
For so God whispers ‘Victory’ in our ears,  
I cannot dare to doubt it.”

Once again  
A growl of fierce approval answered him,  
And Hawkins cried—“I stand by Francis Drake”;  
But Howard, clinging to his old-world order,  
Yet with such manly strength as dared to rank  
Drake’s wisdom of the sea above his own,  
Sturdily shook his head. “I dare not risk  
A close attack. Once grappled we are doomed.  
We’ll follow on their trail no less, with Drake  
Leading. Our oriflamme to-night shall be  
His cresset and stern-lanthorn. Where that shines  
We follow.”

Drake, still thinking in his heart,—  
“And if Spain be not shattered here and now  
We are doomed no less,” must even rest content  
With that good vantage.

As the sunset died  
Over the darkling emerald seas that swelled  
Before the freshening wind, the pinnaces dashed  
To their own ships; and into the mind of Drake

## BOOK XI

---

There stole a plot that twitched his lips to a smile.  
High on the heaving purple of the poop  
Under the glimmer of firm and full-blown sails  
He stood, an iron statue, glancing back  
'Anon at his stern-cresset's crimson flare,  
The star of all the shadowy ships that plunged  
Like ghosts amid the grey stream of his wake,  
And all around him heard the low keen song  
Of hidden ropes above the wail and creak  
Of blocks and long low swish of cloven foam,  
'A keen rope-music in the formless night,  
'A harmony, a strong intent good sound,  
Well-strung and taut, singing the will of man.  
"Your oriflamme," he muttered,—“so you travail  
With sea-speech in the tongue of old Poictiers—  
Shall be my own stern-lanthorn. Watch it well,  
My good Lord Howard."

Over the surging seas  
The little *Revenge* went swooping on the trail,  
Leading the ships of England. One by one  
Out of the gloom before them slowly crept,  
Sinister gleam by gleam, like blood-red stars,  
The rearmost lanthorns of the Spanish Fleet,

## DRAKE

---

A shaggy purple sky of secret storm  
Heaving from north to south upon the black  
Breast of the waters. Once again with lips  
Twitched to a smile, Drake suddenly bade them  
crowd

All sail upon the little *Revenge*. She leapt  
Forward. Smiling he watched the widening gap  
Between the ships that followed and her light,  
Then as to those behind, its flicker must seem  
Wellnigh confused with those of Spain, he cried,  
“Now, master bo’sun, quench their oriflamme,  
Dip their damned cresset in the good black Sea!  
The rearmost light of Spain shall lead them now,  
A little closer, if they think it ours.  
Pray God, they come to blows!”

Even as he spake,  
His cresset-flare went out in the thick night:  
A fluttering as of blind bewildered moths  
A moment seized upon the shadowy ships  
Behind him, then with crowded sail they steered  
Straight for the rearmost cresset-flare of Spain.

## BOOK XII

M EANWHILE, as in the gloom he  
slipped aside  
Along the Spanish ranks, waiting the  
crash  
Of battle, suddenly Drake became aware  
Of strange sails bearing up into the wind  
Around his right, and thought, "the Armada  
strives  
To weather us in the dark." Down went his helm,  
And all alone the little *Revenge* gave chase,  
Till as the moon crept slowly forth, she stood  
Beside the ghostly ships, only to see  
Bewildered Flemish merchantmen, amazed  
With fears of Armageddon—such vast shrouds  
Had lately passed them on the rolling seas.  
Down went his helm again, with one grim curse  
Upon the chance that led him thus astray;  
And down the wind the little *Revenge* once more  
Swept on the trail. Fainter and fainter now

## DRAKE

---

Glared the red beacons on the British coasts,  
And the wind slackened and the glimmering East  
Greyed and reddened, yet Drake had not regained  
Sight of the ships. When the full glory of dawn  
Dazzled the sea, he found himself alone,  
With one huge galleon helplessly drifting  
A cable's-length away. Around her prow,  
*Nuestra Señora del Rosario*,  
Richly emblazoned, gold on red, proclaimed  
The flagship of great Valdes, of the fleet  
Of Andalusia, captain-general. She,  
Last night, in dark collision with the hulks  
Of Spain, had lost her foremast. Through the  
night  
Her guns, long rank on deadly rank, had kept  
All enemies at bay. Drake summoned her  
Instantly to surrender. She returned  
A scornful answer from the glittering poop  
Where two-score officers crowned the golden sea  
And stained the dawn with blots of richer colour  
Loftily clustered in the glowing sky,  
Doubleted with cramoisy velvet, wreathed  
With golden chains, blazing with jewelled swords

## BOOK XII

---

And crusted poignards. "What proud haste was this?"

They asked, glancing at their huge tiers of cannon  
And crowded decks of swarthy soldiery;  
"What madman in yon cockle-shell defied Spain?"  
"Tell them it is El Draque," he said, "who  
lacks

The time to parley; therefore it will be well  
They strike at once, for I am in great haste."  
There, at the sound of that renowned name,  
Without a word down came their blazoned flag!  
Like a great fragment of the dawn it lay  
Crumpled upon their decks. . . .

Into the soft bloom and Italian blue  
Of sparkling, ever-beautiful Torbay,  
Belted as with warm Mediterranean crags,  
The little *Revenge* foamed with her mighty prize,  
A prize indeed—not for the casks of gold  
Drake split in the rich sunlight and poured out  
Like dross amongst his men, but in her hold  
Lay many tons of powder, worth their weight  
In rubies now to Britain. Into the hands

## D R A K E

---

Of swarthy Brixham fishermen he gave  
Prisoners and prize, then—loaded stem to stern  
With powder and shot—their swiftest trawlers  
flew

Like falcons following a thunder-cloud  
Behind him, as with crowded sail he rushed  
On England's trail once more. Like a caged lion  
Drake paced his deck, praying he yet might reach  
The fight in time; and ever the warm light wind  
Slackened. Not till the sun was half-way fallen  
Once more crept out in front those dusky thrones  
Of thunder, heaving on the smooth bright sea  
From North to South with Howard's clustered  
fleet

Like tiny clouds, becalmed, not half a mile  
Behind the Spaniards. For the breeze had failed  
Their blind midnight pursuit; and now attack  
Seemed hopeless. Even as Drake drew nigh, the  
last

Breath of the wind sank. One more day had  
flown,

Nought was accomplished; and the Armada lay  
Some leagues of golden sea-way nearer now

## BOOK XII

---

To its great goal. The sun went down : the moon  
Rose glittering. Hardly a cannon-shot apart  
The two fleets lay becalmed upon the silver  
Swell of the smooth night-tide. The hour had  
come

For Spain to strike. The ships of England drifted  
Helplessly, at the mercy of those great hulks  
Oared by their thousand slaves.

Onward they came,  
Swinging suddenly in tremendous gloom  
Over the silver seas. But even as Drake,  
With eyes on fire at last for his last fight,  
Measured the distance ere he gave the word  
To greet it with his cannon, suddenly  
The shining face of the deep began to shiver  
With dusky patches : the doomed English sails  
Quivered and, filling smart from the Northeast,  
The little *Revenge* rushed down their broken line  
Signalling them to follow, and ere they knew  
What miracle had saved them, they all sprang  
Their luff and ran large out to sea. For now  
The Armada lay to windward, and to fight  
Meant to be grappled and overwhelmed ; but dark

## DRAKE

---

Within the mind of Drake, a fiercer plan  
Already had shaped itself.

“They fly! They fly!”

Rending the heavens from twice ten thousand  
throats

A mighty shout rose from the Spanish Fleet.  
Over the moonlit waves their galleons came  
Towering, crowding, plunging down the wind  
In full chase, while the tempter, Drake, laughed  
low

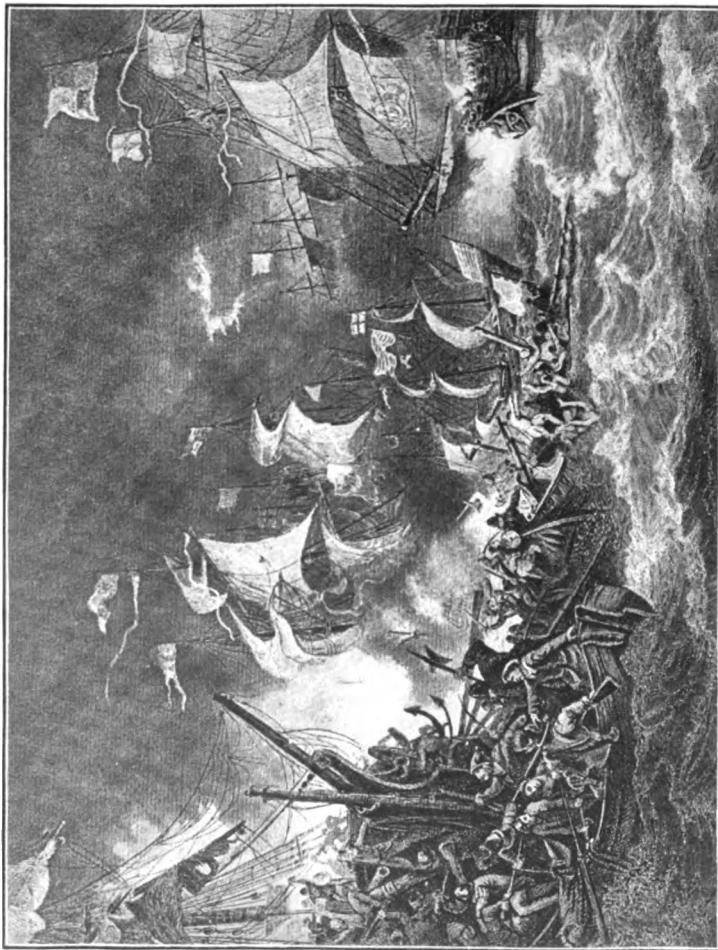
To watch their solid battle-order break  
And straggle. When once more the golden dawn  
Dazzled the deep, the labouring galleons lay  
Scattered by their unequal speed. The wind  
Veered as the sun rose. Once again the ships  
Of England lay to windward. Down swooped  
Drake

Where like a mountain the *San Marcos* heaved  
Her giant flanks alone, having outsailed  
Her huge companions. Then the sea-winds blazed  
With broadsides. Two long hours the sea flamed  
red

All round her. One by one the Titan ships

**THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA**

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## BOOK XII

---

Came surging to her rescue, and met the buffet  
Of battle-thunders, belching iron and flame;  
Nor could they pluck her forth from that red chaos  
Till great Oquendo hurled his mighty prows  
Crashing athwart those thunders, and once more  
Gathered into unshakeable battle-order  
The whole Armada raked the reeking seas.  
Then up the wind the ships of England sheered  
Once more, and one more day drew to its close,  
With little accomplished, half their powder spent,  
And all the Armada moving as of old,  
From sky to sky one heaven-wide zone of storm  
(Though some three galleons out of all their host  
Laboured woundily) down the darkening Channel.  
And all night long on England's guardian heights  
The beacons reddened, and all the next long day  
The impregnable Armada never swerved  
From its tremendous path. In vain did Drake,  
Frobisher, Hawkins, Howard, greatest names  
In all our great sea-history, hover and dart  
Like falcons round the mountainous array.  
Till now, as night fell and they lay abreast  
Of the Isle of Wight, once more the council flag

## DRAKE

---

Flew from the little *Revenge*. With iron face  
Thrust close to Howard's, and outstretched iron  
arm,

Under the stars Drake pointed down the coast  
Where the red beacons flared. "The shoals," he  
hissed,

"The shoals from Owers to Spithead and the net  
Of channels yonder in Portsmouth Roads. At  
dawn

They'll lie to leeward of the Invincible  
Fleet!"

Swiftly, in mighty sweeping lines Drake set  
Before the council his fierce battle-plan  
To drive the Armada down upon the banks  
And utterly shatter it—stroke by well-schemed  
stroke

As he unfolded there his vital plot  
And touched their dead cold warfare into life,  
Where plan before was none, he seemed to tower  
Above them, clad with the deep night of stars;  
And those that late would rival knew him now,  
In all his great simplicity, their king,  
One of the gods of battle, England's Drake,

## BOOK XII

---

A soul that summoned Cæsar from his grave.  
And swept with Alexander o'er the deep.  
So when the dawn thro' rolling wreaths of cloud  
Struggled, and all the waves were molten gold,  
The heart of Spain exulted, for she saw  
The little fleet of England cloven in twain  
As if by some strange discord. A light breeze  
Blew from the ripening East; and, up against it,  
Urged by the very madness of defeat,  
Or so it seemed, one half the British fleet  
Drew nigh, towed by their boats, to challenge the  
vast  
Tempest-winged heaving citadels of Spain,  
At last to the murderous grapple; while far away  
Their other half, led by the flag of Drake,  
Stood out to sea, as if to escape the doom  
Of that sheer madness, for the light wind now  
Could lend them no such wings to hover and swoop  
As heretofore. Nearer the mad ships came  
Towed by their boats, till now upon their right  
To windward loomed the Fleet Invincible  
With all its thunder-clouds, and on their left  
To leeward, gleamed the perilous white shoals

## DRAKE

---

With their long level lightnings under the cliffs  
Of England, from the green glad garden of  
Wight  
To the Owers and Selsea Bill. Right on they  
came,  
And suddenly the wrench of thundering cannon  
Shook the vast hulks that towered above them.  
Red  
Flamed the blue sea between. Thunder to thunder  
Answered, and still the ships of Drake sped out  
To the open sea. Sidonia saw them go,  
Furrowing the deep that like a pale-blue shield  
Lay diamond-dazzled now in the full light.  
Rich was the omen of that day for Spain,  
The feast-day of Sidonia's patron-saint!  
And the priests chanted and the trumpets blew  
Triumphantly! A universal shout  
Went skyward from the locust-swarming decks,  
A shout that rent the golden morning clouds  
From heaven to menacing heaven, as castle to  
castle  
Flew the great battle-signal, and like one range  
Of moving mountains, those almighty ranks

## BOOK XII

---

Swept down upon the small forsaken ships!  
The lion's brood was in the imperial nets  
Of Rome at last. Onward the mountains came  
With all their golden clouds of sail and flags  
Like streaming cataracts; all their glorious chasms  
And glittering steeps, echoing, re-echoing,  
Calling, answering, as with the herald winds  
That blow the golden trumpets of the morning  
From Skiddaw to Helvellyn. In the midst  
The great *San Martin* surged with heaven-wide  
    press  
Of proudly billowing sail; and yet once more  
Slowly, solemnly, like another dawn  
Up to her mast-head soared in thunderous gold  
The sacred standard of their last crusade;  
While round a hundred prows that heaved thro'  
    heaven  
Like granite cliffs, their black wet shining flanks,  
And swept like moving promontories, rolled  
The splendid long-drawn thunders of the foam,  
And flashed the untamed white lightnings of the  
    sea  
Back to a morn unhaloyarded of man,

## DRAKE

---

Back to the unleashed sun and blazoned clouds  
And azure sky—the unfettered flag of God.

Like one huge moving coast-line on they came  
Crashing, and closed the ships of England round  
With one fierce crescent of thunder and sweeping flame,  
One crimson scythe of Death, whose long sweep  
drowned  
The eternal ocean with its mighty sound,  
From heaven to heaven, one roar, one glitter of doom,  
While out to the sea-line's blue remotest bound  
The ships of Drake still fled, and the red fume  
Of battle thickened and shrouded shoal and sea with  
gloom.

The distant sea, the close white menacing shoals  
Are shrouded! And the lion's brood fight on!  
And now death's very midnight round them rolls;  
Rent is the flag that late so proudly shone:  
The red decks reel, and their last hope seems gone!  
Round them they still keep clear one ring of sea:  
It narrows; but the lion's brood fight on,  
Ungrappled still, still fearless and still free,  
While the white menacing shoals creep slowly out to lee.

## BOOK XII

---

Now through the red rents of each fire-cleft cloud,  
High o'er the British blood-greased decks flash out  
Thousands of swarthy faces, crowd on crowd  
Surging, with one tremendous hurricane shout  
*On, to the grapple!* and still the grim redoubt  
Of the oaken bulwarks rolls them back again,  
As buffeted waves that shatter in the furious bout  
When cannonading cliffs meet the full main  
And hurl it back in smoke,—so Britain hurls back  
Spain;

Hurls her back, only to see her return,  
Darkening the heavens with billow on billow of sail:  
Round that huge storm the waves like lava burn,  
The daylight withers, and the sea-winds fail!  
Seamen of England, what shall now avail  
Your naked arms? Before those blasts of doom  
The sun is quenched, the very sea-waves quail:  
High overhead their triumphing thousands loom,  
When hark! what low deep guns to windward suddenly  
boom?

What low deep strange new thunders far away  
Respond to the triumphant shout of Spain?  
Is it the wind that shakes their giant array?

## D R A K E

---

Is it the deep wrath of the rising main?  
Is it—*El Draque*? El Draque! Ay, shout again,  
His thunders burst upon your windward flanks;  
The shoals creep out to leeward! Is it plain  
At last, what earthquake heaves your herded ranks  
Huddled in huge dismay tow'rds those white foam-swept banks?

Plain, it was plain at last, what cunning lured,  
What courage held them over the jaws o' the pit,  
Till Drake could hurl them down. The little ships  
Of Howard and Frobisher, towed by their boats,  
Slipped away in the smoke, while out at sea  
Drake, with a gale of wind behind him, crashed  
Volley on volley into the helpless rear  
Of Spain and drove it down, huddling the whole  
Invincible Fleet together upon the verge  
Of doom. One awful surge of stormy wrath  
Heaved thro' the struggling citadels of Spain.  
From East to West their desperate signal flew,  
And like a drove of bullocks, with the foam  
Flecking their giant sides, they staggered and  
swerved,

## BOOK XII

---

Careening tow'rd the shallows as they turned,  
Then in one wild stampede of sheer dismay  
Rushed, tacking seaward, while the grey sea plain  
Smoked round them, and the cannonades of Drake  
Raked their wild flight; and their crusading flag,  
Tangled in one black maze of crashing spars,  
Whirled downward like the pride of Lucifer  
From heaven to hell.

Out tow'rd the coasts of France

They plunged, narrowly weathering the Ower  
banks;

Then, once again, they formed in ranks compact,  
Roundels impregnable, wrathfully bent at last  
Never to swerve again from their huge path  
And solid end—to join with Parma's host,  
And hurl the whole of Europe on our isle.  
Another day was gone, much powder spent;  
And, while Lord Howard exulted and conferred  
Knighthoods on his brave seamen, Drake alone  
Knew that his mighty plan, in spite of all,  
Had failed,—knew that wellnigh his last great  
chance  
Was lost of wrecking the Spaniards ere they joined

## D R A K E

---

Parma. The night went by, and the next day,  
With scarce a visible scar the Invincible Fleet  
Drew onward tow'rd its goal, unshakeable now  
In that grim battle-order. Beacons flared  
Along the British coast, and pikes flashed out  
All night, and a strange dread began to grip  
The heart of England, as it seemed the might  
Of seamen most renowned in all the world  
Checked not that huge advance. Yet at the heart  
Of Spain no less there clung a vampire fear  
And strange foreboding, as the next day passed  
Quietly, and behind her all day long  
The shadowy ships of Drake stood on her trail  
Quietly, patiently, as death or doom,  
Unswerving and implacable.

While the sun  
Sank thro' long crimson fringes on that eve,  
The fleets were passing Calais, and the wind  
Blew fair behind them. A strange impulse seized  
Spain to shake off those bloodhounds from her  
trail,

And suddenly the whole Invincible Fleet  
Anchored, in hope the following wind would bear

## BOOK XII

---

The ships of England past and carry them down  
To leeward. But their grim insistent watch  
Was ready; and though their van had wellnigh  
crashed

Into the rear of Spain, in the golden dusk,  
They, too, a cannon-shot away, at once  
Anchored, to windward still.

Quietly heaved

The golden sea in that tremendous hour  
Fraught with the fate of Europe and mankind,  
As yet once more the flag of council flew,  
And Hawkins, Howard, Frobisher, and Drake  
Gathered together upon the little *Revenge*,  
While like a triumphing fire the news was borne  
To Spain, already, that the Invincible Fleet  
Had reached its end, ay, and "that great black dog  
Sir Francis Drake" was writhing now in chains  
Beneath the torturer's hands.

High on his poop

He stood, a granite rock, above the throng  
Of captains, there amid the breaking waves  
Of clashing thought and swift opinion,  
Silent, gazing where now the cool fresh wind

## D R A K E

---

Blew steadily up the terrible North Sea  
Which rolled under the clouds into a gloom  
Unfathomable. Once only his lips moved  
Half-consciously, breathing those mighty words,  
*The clouds His chariot!* Then, suddenly, he  
turned  
And looked upon the little flock of ships  
That followed on the fleet of England, sloops  
Helpless in fight. These, manned by the brave  
zeal  
Of many a noble house, from hour to hour  
Had plunged out from the coast to join his flag.  
“ Better if they had brought us powder and food  
Than sought to join us thus,” he had growled; but  
now  
“ Lord God,” he cried aloud, “ they’ll light our  
road  
To victory yet!” And in great sweeping strokes  
Once more he drew his mighty battle-plan  
Before the captains. In the thickening gloom  
They stared at his grim face as at a man  
Risen from hell, with all the powers of hell  
At his command,—a face tempered like steel

## BOOK XII

---

In the everlasting furnaces, a rock  
Of adamant, while with a voice that blent  
With the ebb and flow of the everlasting sea  
He spake, and at the low deep menacing words  
Monotonous with the unconquerable  
Passion and level strength of his great soul  
They shuddered; for the man seemed more than  
man,  
And from his iron lips resounded doom  
As from the lips of cannon—doom to Spain,  
Inevitable, unconquerable doom.

And through that mighty host of Spain there crept  
Cold winds of fear, as to the darkening sky  
Once more from lips of kneeling thousands swept  
The vespers of an Empire—one vast cry,  
**SALVE REGINA!** God, what wild reply  
Hissed from the clouds in that dark hour of dreams?

**AVE MARIA, those about to die**

*Salute thee!* See, what ghostly pageant streams  
Above them? What thin hands point down like pale  
moonbeams?

Thick as the ghosts that Dante saw in hell  
Whirled on the blast thro' boundless leagues of pain,

## D R A K E

---

Thick, thick as wind-blown leaves innumerable,  
In the Inquisition's yellow robes her slain  
And tortured thousands, dense as the red rain  
That wellnigh quenched her fires, went hissing by  
With twisted shapes, raw from the racks of Spain,  
**SALVE REGINA!**—rushing thro' the sky,  
And pale hands pointing down and lips that mocked her  
cry.

Ten thousand times ten thousand!—what are these  
That are arrayed in yellow robes and sweep  
Between your prayers and God like phantom seas  
Prophesying over your masts? Could Rome not keep  
The keys? Who loosed these dead to break your sleep?  
**SALVE REGINA,** cry, yea, cry aloud,  
**AVE MARIA!** Ye have sown: shall ye not reap?  
**SALVE REGINA!** Christ, what fiery cloud  
Suddenly rolls to windward, high o'er mast and shroud?

Are hell-gates burst at last? For the black deep  
To windward burns with streaming crimson fires!  
Over the wild strange waves, they shudder and creep  
Nearer—strange smoke-wreathed masts and spars, red  
spires

## BOOK XII

---

And blazing hulks, vast roaring blood-red pyres,  
Fierce as the flames ye fed with flesh of men  
Amid the imperial pomp and chanting choirs  
Of Alva—from El Draque’s red hand again  
Sweep the wild fire-ships down upon the Fleet of Spain.

Onward before the freshening wind they come  
Full fraught with all the terrors, all the bale  
That flamed so long for the delight of Rome,  
The shrieking fires that struck the sunlight pale,  
The avenging fires at last! Now what avail  
Your thousand ranks of cannon? Swift, cut free,  
Cut your scorched cables! Cry, reel backward, quail,  
Crash your huge huddled ranks together, flee!  
Behind you roars the fire, before—the dark North Sea!

. . . . .

Dawn, everlasting and omnipotent  
Dawn rolled in crimson o'er the spar-strewn waves,  
As the last trumpet shall in thunder roll  
O'er heaven and earth and ocean. Far away,  
The ships of Spain, great raggéd piles of gloom  
And shaggy splendour, leaning to the North  
Like sun-shot clouds confused, or rent apart  
In scattered squadrons, furiously plunged,

## D R A K E

---

Burying their mighty prows i' the broad grey rush  
Of smoking billowy hills, or heaving high  
Their giant bowsprits to the wandering heavens,  
Labouring in vain to return, struggling to lock  
Their far-flung ranks anew, but drifting still  
To leeward, driven by the ever-increasing storm  
Straight for the dark North Sea. Hard by there  
lurched

One gorgeous galleon on the ravening shoals,  
Feeding the white maw of the famished waves  
With gold and purple webs from kingly looms  
And spilth of world-wide empires. Howard, still  
Planning to pluck the Armada plume by plume,  
Swooped down upon that prey and swiftly engaged  
Her desperate guns; while Drake, our ocean king,  
Knowing the full worth of that doom-fraught hour,  
Glanced neither to the left nor right, but stood  
High on his poop, with calm implacable face  
Gazing as into eternity, and steered  
The crowded glory of his dawn-flushed sails  
In superb onset, straight for the great fleet  
Invincible; and after him the main  
Of England's fleet, knowing its captain now,

## BOOK XII

---

Followed, and with them rushed—from sky to sky  
One glittering charge of wrath—the storm's white  
waves,

The twenty thousand foaming chariots  
Of God

None but the everlasting voice  
Of him who fought at Salamis might sing  
The fight of that dread Sabbath. Not mankind  
Waged it alone. War waged in heaven that day,  
Where Michael and his angels drove once more  
The hosts of darkness ruining down the abyss  
Of chaos. Light against darkness, Liberty  
Against all dark old despotism, unsheathed  
The sword in that great hour. Behind the strife  
Of men embattled deeps beyond all thought  
Moved in their awful panoply, as move  
Silent, invisible, swift, under the clash  
Of waves and flash of foam, huge ocean glooms  
And vast reserves of inappellable power.  
The bowsprits ranked on either fore-front seemed  
But spear-heads of those dread antagonists  
Invisible: the shuddering sails of Spain  
Dusk with the shadow of death, the sunward sails

## D R A K E

---

Of England full-fraught with the breath of God.  
Onward the ships of England and God's waves  
Triumphantly charged, glittering companions,  
And poured their thunders on the extreme right  
Of Spain, whose giant galleons as they lurched  
Heavily to the roughening sea and wind  
With all their grinding, wrenching cannon, worked  
On rolling platforms by the helpless hands  
Of twenty thousand soldiers, without skill  
In stormy seas, rent the indifferent sky  
Or tore the black troughs of the swirling deep  
In vain, while volley on volley of flame and iron  
Burst thro' their four-foot beams, fierce raking  
blasts  
From ships that came and went on wings of the  
wind  
All round their mangled bulk, scarce a pike's thrust  
Away, sweeping their decks from stem to stern  
(Between the rush and roar of the great green  
waves)  
With crimson death, rending their timbered towns  
And populous floating streets into wild squares  
Of slaughter and devastation; driving them down,

## BOOK XII

---

Huddled on their own centre, cities of shame  
And havoc, in fiery forests of tangled wrath,  
With hurricanes of huge masts and swarming spars  
And multitudinous decks that heaved and sank  
Like earthquake-smitten palaces, when doom  
Comes, with one stride, across the pomp of kings.  
All round them shouted the everlasting sea,  
Burst in white thunders on the streaming poops  
And blinded fifty thousand eyes with spray.  
Once, as a gorgeous galleon, drenched with blood  
Began to founder and settle, a British captain  
Called from his bulwarks, bidding her fierce crew  
Surrender and come aboard    Straight through the  
    heart  
A hundred muskets answered that appeal. . .  
*Sink or destroy!*   The deadly signal flew  
From mast to mast of England. Once, twice,  
    thrice,  
A huge sea-castle heaved her haggled bulk  
Heavenward, and with a cry that rent the heavens  
From all her crowded decks, and one deep roar  
As of a cloven world or the dark surge  
Of chaos yawning, sank: the swirling slopes

## D R A K E

---

Of the sweeping billowy hills for a moment  
swarmed  
With struggling insect-men, sprinkling the foam  
With tossing arms; then the indifferent sea  
Rolled its grey smoking waves across the place  
Where they had been. Here a great galleasse  
poured  
Red rivers through her scuppers and torn flanks,  
And there a galleon, wrapped in creeping fire,  
Suddenly like a vast volcano split  
Asunder, and o'er the vomiting sulphurous clouds  
And spouting spread of crimson, flying spars  
And heads torn from their trunks and scattered  
limbs  
Leapt, hideous gouts of death, against the glare.  
Hardly the thrust of a pike away, the ships  
Of England flashed and swerved, till in one mass  
Of thunder-blasted splendour and shuddering  
gloom  
Those gorgeous floating citadels huddled and  
shrank  
Their towers, and all the glory of dawn that rolled  
And burned along the tempest of their banners

## BOOK XII

---

Withered, as on a murderer's face the light  
Withers before the accuser. All their proud  
Castles and towers and heaven-wide clouds of sail  
Shrank to a darkening horror, like the heart  
Of Evil, plucked from midnight's fiercest gloom,  
With all its curses quivering and alive;  
A horror of wild masts and tangled spars,  
Like some great kraken with a thousand arms  
Torn from the filthiest cavern of the deep,  
Writhing, and spewing forth its venomous fumes  
On every side. *Sink or destroy!*—all day  
The deadly signal flew; and ever the sea  
Swelled higher, and the flashes of the foam  
Broadened and leapt and spread as the wild  
white fire  
That flourishes with the wind; and ever the storm  
Drove the grim battle onward to the wild  
Menace of the dark North Sea. At set of sun,  
Even as below the sea-line the broad disc  
Sank like a red-hot cannon-ball through scurf  
Of seething molten lead, the *Santa Maria*  
Uttering one cry that split the heart of heaven  
Went down with all hands, roaring into the dark.

## D R A K E

---

Hardly five rounds of shot were left to Drake!  
Gun after gun fell silent, as the night  
Deepened—" Yet we must follow them to the  
North,"  
He cried, " or they'll return yet to shake hands  
With Parma! Come, we'll put a brag upon it,  
And hunt them onward as we lacked for nought!"  
So, when across the swinging smoking seas,  
Grey and splendid and terrible broke the day  
Once more, the flying Invincible fleet beheld  
Upon their weather-beam, and dogging them  
Like their own shadow, the dark ships of Drake,  
Unswerving and implacable. Ever the wind  
And sea increased; till now the heaving deep  
Swelled all round them into sulky hills  
And rolling mountains, whose majestic crests,  
Like wild white flames far blown and savagely  
flickering,  
Swept thro' the clouds; and, on their vanishing  
slopes,  
Past the pursuing fleet began to swirl  
Scores of horses and mules, drowning or drowned,  
Cast overboard to lighten the wild flight

## BOOK XII

---

Of Spain, and save her water-casks, a trail  
Telling of utmost fear. And ever the storm  
Roared louder across the leagues of rioting sea,  
Driving her onward like a mighty stag  
Chased by the wolves. Off the dark Firth of  
Forth

At last, Drake signalled and lay head to wind,  
Watching. "The chariots of God are twenty  
thousand,"

He muttered, as, for a moment close at hand,  
Caught in some league-wide whirlpool of the sea,  
The mighty galleons crowded and towered and  
plunged

Above him on the huge o'erhanging billows,  
As if to crash down on his decks; the next,  
A mile of ravening sea had swept between  
Each of those wind-whipt straws and they were  
gone,

With all their tiny shrivelling scrolls of sail,  
Through roaring deserts of embattled death,  
Where like a hundred thousand chariots charged  
With lightnings and with thunders, the great deep  
Hurled them away to the North. From sky to sky

## D R A K E

---

One blanching bursting storm of infinite seas  
Followed them, broad white cataracts, hills that  
grasped

With struggling Titan hands at reeling heavens,  
And roared their doom-fraught greetings from  
Cape Wrath

Round to the Bloody Foreland.

There should the yeast  
Of foam receive the purple of many kings,  
And the grim gulfs devour the blood-bought gold  
Of Aztecs and of Incas, and the reefs,  
League after league, bristle with mangled spars,  
And all along their coast the murderous kerns  
Of Catholic Ireland strip the gorgeous silks  
And chains and jewel-encrusted crucifixes  
From thousands dead, and slaughter thousands  
more

With gallow-glass axes as they blindly crept  
Forth from the surf and jagged rocks to seek  
Pity of their own creed.

To meet that doom  
Drake watched their sails go shrivelling, till the  
last

## BOOK XII

---

Flicker of spars vanished as a skeleton leaf  
Upon the blasts of winter, and there was nought  
But one wide wilderness of splendour and gloom  
Under the northern clouds.

“Not unto us,”  
Cried Drake, “not unto us—but unto Him  
Who made the sea, belongs our England now!  
Pray God that heart and mind and soul we prove  
Worthy among the nations of this hour  
And this great victory, whose ocean fame  
Shall wash the world with thunder till that day  
When there is no more sea, and the strong cliffs  
Pass like a smoke, and the last peal of it  
Sounds thro’ the trumpet.”

So, with close-hauled sails,  
Over the rolling triumph of the deep,  
Lifting their hearts to heaven, they turned back  
home.

THE END







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